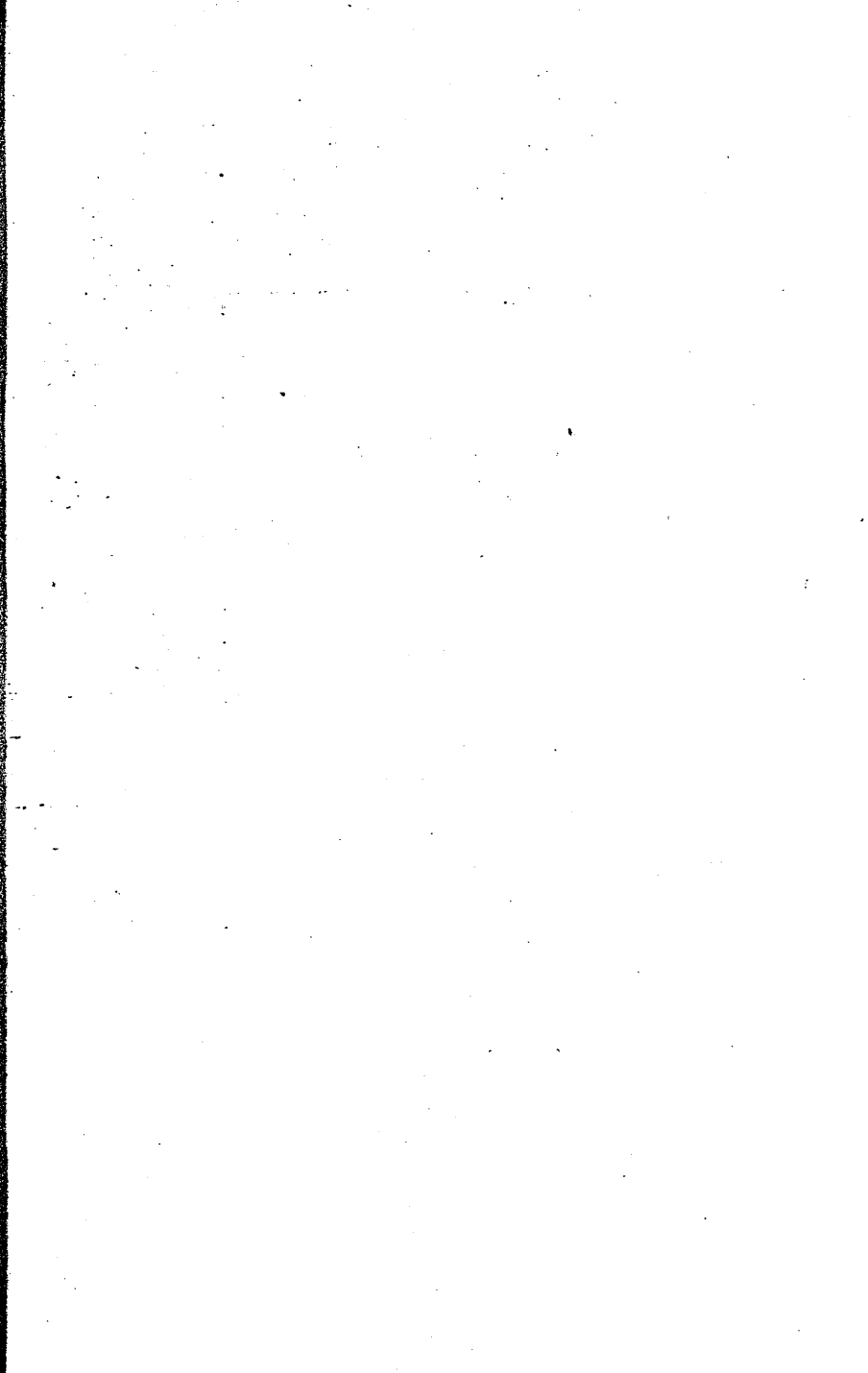


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A BOOK OF CLOUDS

Out-of-Doors with Jesus

BY
W. A. Quayle
WILLIAM A. QUAYLE



THE ABINGDON PRESS

NEW YORK

CINCINNATI

VIA RAIL
TO
SERRA ROLL COACHING

BS 2422

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Printed in the United States of America

First Edition Printed December, 1924
Reprinted July, 1925

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I

THE OUT-OF-DOORS JESUS



NOW that the risings and settings of centuries of suns have passed since the most winsome and beautiful and gracious Personality that ever walked with naked feet these earthly ways, we are beginning to see clearly how on the landscape of his life everything occurred. It was in veracity the only universal landscape. The highest things and the high things and the things neither high nor highest, things simply lowly and lovely—they all were there. Not a flower of the spirit but blossomed and exhaled perfume in his spirit.

The immensities became him. The little things like bluets of the early spring became him too. We have missed much of him because the territory of his spirit was more spacious than the spaces inhabited by all the stars.

Nor can we study him like anybody else. He is not like anybody else. He is The Great Solitary. He is the Vast Ambiguity, not from any intention of his, but because of the Unknown Land of which he is the dim outlines, whose amazing shores can only come into sight as the slow cycles wheel through their stupendous orbits. In scanning the Mountain Range that he

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is we have not marked the brooklet shining and singing at his feet. In his blinding solar splendor we have missed the wee stars shining in his evening sky. He is the Exhaustless because he is the Infinite; and he is the Infinite because he is God.

Looking at "the days of his flesh" in the quiet light of far removes where things may be seen gently as in an Indian summer haze, it comes on us as a secret surprise how his was a life lived out of doors. Born out of doors and died out of doors are the parentheses which include a life scarcely ever sheltered from the sky.

II

THE SHADOW ON THE DIAL



IF we should desire to company with Jesus as he lived our life, we should find ourselves continuously out of doors. His shadow is cast as on a sundial out in the open sky. He frequented the fields. He seemed to pant for the open. Indoors was stifling to his breathing. He was the most out-of-doors man that ever lived. Things in the open beckoned to him; and his body and spirit said, "Coming!" His parables lived out of doors and his healings. It seems unthinkable how much of what he said and did was out-of-doors talk and out-of-doors doing and how much of where he lived was out of doors. The starshine and the dayspring seemed always on his face, and the wind was always running its fingers through his beard and hair.

I mark the out-of-doors influence of Jesus on my own life. I was a country lad, barefoot, freckle-faced, and freckle-handed. The fields were my landscape; grazing cattle and the growing corn were my employment. All weathers must I be abroad. The farmer's boy is not apt to take to farming. He wants the city, its voices, its unrest, its tramping feet, its sleeplessness.

I do not affect that farming attracted me as a lad. The early rising, the late going to bed, the little sleep, the no play, the hot length of summer's burning days plagued me. The far-off was nearer to me than the near-at-hand. Farm work made me testy. Things of the farm did not seem idyllic. Bucolic poetry did not weave a spell for my spirit. Country things nettled me. I was dreamer and scholar by instinct. Maud Muller with her sunbonnet and bare feet at the haying and the "Barefoot boy with cheeks of tan" were not pictures my eyes cared to gaze upon. Yet am I, as I now perceive, a lifetime countryman. And looking at myself in an entirely impersonal way to catch the reasons of this country love, I find Jesus is the chief maker of me countryman.

I have read and reread the poets. Their voices have all my life been very sweet to my ears. They talked much of country and country things. I find my volumes of the poets marked up with my rude check marks set over against their poet-allusions to all things out of doors. Yet did I not know till manhood at the prime how saturated my spirit was with those sayings of the dark and starlight fading at the dawn.

It was not the poets who taught me the age-long loveliness of nature, as I now perceive. That genesis of my love of the world of growing things was different and sweeter and higher.

When a lad on the dewy side of twenty I met

Jesus. I experienced religion, as we say, and Jesus became to me the Poet of my life and the Preceptor of my spirit. As a plowboy I carried a copy of the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in my overalls pocket until it was worn out, and then another, and another. When I rested the horses at the row-end, plowing the field for grain or cultivating the growing and green and rhythmic corn, I would snatch a little from the strangest book this earth has ever written. I did not read for nature; I read for Jesus. He had done all things for me. I saw him ruddy like amazing dawn. He was the Gleam I followed. Not "Merlin and the Gleam" but Jesus and the Gleam. There the blue sky or the gray sky above and the sweet wind blowing, and I with the Christ out of doors and the farmer boy fellowshiping in farmer-boy loneliness with the Solitary Christ I became poet under the sky by the out-of-doorness of Jesus. He spoke on country things; I heard him. I could not forget what he said; and I noticed the things he spake of and the flowers he loved and the sweet fields in which he loved to walk and where he felt at home. Since the day when I read his poems on the wild flower tossing wild flame on Judæan plains and hills, wild flowers have held my eyes. They do still. They will forever. He surely will have in his heaven some wild flowers blooming for a lad that learned his wild-flower love of him.

So I, looking through the poets of all my reading years, find I marked the poet utterances to fields and clouds and running water and evening herds by the streams with marks such as the wind makes with dune grasses on the yellow dunes in summer, and now know as I regard my markings that not those golden poets, Theocritus and Chaucer and Shakespeare and Tennyson and Wordsworth and Stephen Phillips and Francis Thompson and Shelley and Lowell were the west wind blowing in my face. Jesus was my west wind.

His winsome "Follow me" led me afield to the mountain and the sea and the night of stars, as his sublime "Follow me" will in due course of days lead me afar where Day Dawn Sempiternal shall wash my spirit with its everlasting light.

Jesus was so different to me from all the other poet-lovers of out-of-doors. They found the world fair and its smell of the rain on the air sweet. But Jesus made the out-of-doors. They saw it and marked its beauty and said it in words like starlight; and we name them poets. Jesus made the world which the Greeks in sheer delight of it called "Cosmos"—a blossom, a fragrant loveliness. The Artist who dreamed and fashioned the far reaches of dale and hill and river and swaying branch and singing bird and singing woman with her child—that Fashioner, his name is Jesus.

And in company with him I felt a lure, and immeasurable invitation which haunts me like the calling of the sea or purple morning breaking. "Whither going, my Poet, Jesus?" I inquire; and the answer is, "Out of doors. Come with me." And I go.

The shadow on the dial is Jesus: and the shadow is pure light.

III

JESUS AND THE DESERT



ESUS' arrival in the desert was on this wise:

“And Jesus when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness”; and Saint Mark adds, he “Was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.”

This wilderness was a desert. Out alone, pushed by the Spirit of God, went this Youth of the world to meet his hour, and he went where loneliness and aloneness were the solitary inhabitants. When he wanted aloneness he knew where to go. The desert beckoned. The tawny spaces beckoned his feet and his heart. Where in desert solitudes Moses long ago had seen the bush burn unconsumed, there Jesus came to fix his eyes on God with naught of human face or voice or foot to interrupt the rapt communion.

The desert—the hot dry spaces where rocks burned hot as fire, where the slow eagle climbed

the burning sky, where the lion could not be distinguished from the rocks, where the jackal as he slunk along could not be noted save by an eagle's eye, far-soaring; where every rivulet was dry, where the dry grass whistled in the winds of day or night, where the sun rose without blinking into a firmament which seemed cast of molten metal, where the sun's rays blistered all they touched, where no tree grew with healing shadow, nor any cool wind took momentary pity on the spent traveler; where from every handbreadth of landscape rose a continuous haze of heat, where shadows fell black like a deep night at the middle of the day, where no footpaths gave kindly hints of human feet having loitered here; where no human habitation set up its invitation to companionship and comfort and domestic peace, where near and far the heat waves shimmered as if the ground smoked, where morning rose and evening set with a leap like a meteor quenched in the sea, where scattered wrinkled and dwarfed plants gave out incense like a wounded heart, where no cry for help could think to have response, where no smoke rose at the time of the evening meal, where no child sang or cried and no woman in homely woman's garments passed to and fro at the household task, where the moon rose and looked and saw naught to love its tender light—thither Jesus came.

He had momentous business. Nothing must intrude. He came to have it out with God. His

hunger of heart fairly hurled him—"driven by the Spirit" is the gospel writer's word—to meet God. When God is to be had no other companionship should intrude. There is room many a time for God and everybody else, yet there are times when there is room for God and nobody else. It was that time with Jesus. He ran like a rushing stream to the desert, and, arriving, felt at home. He could not leave it. Forty days there he dwelt in desert solitude unknowing any solitude. He felt girt with endless spring. He heard tireless trumpets blow far off yet near. They were the trumpets of the sky.

Fashion to your thought the God of the Desert alone in his desert. How the heart quickens beat to that consideration. Whoever loves not deserts, God is not one of them. The strange, weird, fathomless wonder of the desert began in God's thought and stays and can stay and will stay as one of the wildest dreams this earth knows. Where Saharas drift their tedious sand, and the Arizonas smell to heaven with their wild sage breath, and the night settles down like a nesting bird with stars burning bright as if just lit on their first night, where the cleanness is like the cleanness of the sea and the smell is as of dried-sea breath, what hinders such creations being a perfect poem of the Chief Poet?

Palestine we know. Though it was a miniature land, yet is it *now* the Holy Land because there Jesus walked and spake and saved the lost

and hung resurrections along all skies that were to be; and that land compassed our world landscape. The desert was part of it. A Dead Sea was one of its barren places. The earth sank below sea levels and held as on bended knee, a chalice into which the sacred Jordan poured. It was scarce a stonecast of David's sling from lovely, lowly Bethlehem, where the sheep fell asleep in the dewless grass to where the desert Dead Sea lay blinkless in the sun. Nor flower nor bird companioned with it; and the wheeling eagle passed it by; and the viewless wind passed over it neglected; and somewhere wandered the Saviour of the world in solitude and not solitary. Deserts, take heart. The Son of man housed him in thy prevailing peace. He needed thee. He wanted thee. Thou wast waiting for him and he was thine inhabitant. Washed by thy calm at night, burned by thy sun at noon, untouched by thy hunger and thy thirst and unafraid of any desert fear, he was at home in thee. A month of stars and moonlight and sudden dark and day-spring, he and his Father fellowshiped. Desert, this is thy coronation. He wanted thee. He sanctified thy burning loneliness by the pressure of his holy feet. The desert is a tone of God's voice and a thrummed bit of music of his harp.

Wherefore the desert has caught a new wonder. We wot of it as we could not before. He has been there. What he saw in it and wanted in it we may wander to find. The desert Christ

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accepted thy hospitality. Therefore art thou blessed forever.

“He was in the wilderness with the wild beasts and the angels came and administered to him.”

IV

JESUS AND THE BIRDS

“**A**ND to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.”

“Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.”

“And it came to pass that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.”

“If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?”

“Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?”

“And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.”

“Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap: which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?”

“And Peter said, Man, I know not what

thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice."

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not."

"The Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon him."

ACROSS the sky of Jesus birds continually make their fascinating flight. He had watched the eagles on majestic wing in effortless motion. He had seen the pigeons in companies gyrating in happy love of wings and sky. He had seen the homeward flight of ravens, who watched in the skies and knew when day was nearing night.

One can see far from Nazareth. From Nazareth to the Great Sea was unimpeded vision. On days of crystalline atmosphere the blue of the sea was visible as it and the blue sky met and kissed. In that wide Esdraelon plain and sky birds were visible very far away. Jesus watched them as boys have since boys were, only watched them more intently, for he watched them as nobody ever did. The Maker of birds might well be delighted in their happy, hurrying flight and in their bickering or singing ways.

Birds are a singular loveliness and laughter. Their flight is laughter. Their song is their laughter. Their nest-building is laughter. When birds build nests they sing. When they do not they are usually songless. If ever a daintier thing was thought of by the thoughtful God than the bird's head, tucked under his wing for sleep, I know not what it is, except a babe cuddling to its mother's breast. These are two inexpressible lovelinesses. Were winter ten months long, it were well worth waiting through just to see the migratory birds return, to hear their prodigal delight of song, when they fairly sing themselves silent in their immense hilarity of heart. What can exceed the rhythm and poetry of the swallows' ecstatic motion, living in the sky and seemingly never tired though in such endless ebb and flow of wing. I could watch them for a thousand years. I do watch them with no intermission of delight, as they sail on through the blue seas of the sky. How much more He? They are bread-winners in their flight, but are at the same time artists of dream, and haunt man in their ever-varying, never-wavering wingings.

Those who are wise enough to observe birds and bird ways, bird comings and goings, never tire in their observation. When and how they build their nests, when they lift their gladness in song, when they thrust their brood into the sky to try their wings, when they grow mute in

the fall time, and when they gather in clouds to bear themselves south, how they flock and fly in aerial battalions in the sky (as black birds do) and practice flight, and maneuver in such wise as to astonish all but themselves! So they leave their nests, erstwhile homes of life and hunger and growth and feathering and dim longing for the sky and the strife of wings, and leave them desolated of the shadow of a mothering wing, with stray leaves nesting there, and finally a flock of vagrant snowflakes nestling there. And when the last voice is silenced, and the last nest desolate, and the last sweet note has died, how lonesome is the sky and how pathetic the wind with scarcely ever a bird song in it! And how mournful is the sky where the martins spilled their love note in the spring, and wandered all the summer hours in tireless journeyings! And when the meadow larks grown silent long ago do not shine now with the stars of their yellow breasts, so that our lower sky may mistake them for sunlight, their melody fades away, and hushes to the end that we might have an expectation of their return to make our spirits glad.

The same Christ who bade us consider the wild flowers, bade us consider the ravens. There is theme for endless consideration in any flower or in any bird. We can observe what birds do, but we never get any nearer their secret. They humble me to the dust. Man gets no nearer the

bird than to picture it, hear its song, study its nest, and make notes on its coming and going. He counts the eggs, but has no scintilla of knowledge of how an egg to which no chemist analysis can give any clue, will hatch, feather for feather, hue for hue, note for note in song. Every bird is a mystery so clouded as to remain impenetrable as the depths of the sea. Every bird is a remorseless humiliation to man's pride of penetration into the secrets of anything; and the bird's nests are flowers in song and are part of the prodigal delight of the world.

In the story of Jesus turtledoves and pigeons find their place. These constituted the offering of such as were positively poor, and are consequently a faint but serene light to hold in the hand when our eyes turn to the nativity of Jesus. Mary was undeniably poor—that poor, so as to remind us of the sacred saying, "Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor." He descended from the highest heaven to the foot of the ladder to be born among cattle and to have the offering of the poorest made to celebrate his advent. That saying does give a hint very tender and very glad and very beautiful. Jesus came down where we live. The doves made mention of his condescension in sacrificial terms no stormy ages can ever muffle to silence. I can scarcely see a pigeon in the steeples or circling in the sky or on the ground without grateful recollection and reverence of my Lord. They have

their part in the most beautiful story ever told in the world.

"Birds of the air," your Master noticed you as he gave you wings for flight and voice for song, and spread your table for you.

"Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings?" He noticed the humblest plebeian bird, and said over it the weightiest words concerning providence ever uttered. The lowliest became the annunciator of the lordliest. All creation is under the canopy of divine love and care.

". . . I cannot drift
Beyond his love and care."

Quaint Whittier saw that. And he saw it as Jesus said it, touching the sparrows. "The ravens." The birds have a Father. He giveth them their daily bread. At earliest daydawn and at latest gloaming the birds sing their praise to God. There is no other explanation of the freshet of song that the birds pour on the day-break of the sky and on the gloaming shadow. They praise their Father which is in heaven. And to hear them is a call to prayer.

"The rooks are blown about the sky," as Tennyson saw them, and when, after a day spent in foreign fields, the ravens make their homeward flight to their rookery with hushed voices sometimes, or when they brawl in summer greenery or in winter's naked loneliness, we do well to consider them. He pointed these out to us.

and we will. This raven has passed His lips and so cannot be ignored or forgotten. They remind us perpetually of Him, as he reminds us perpetually of them. His providence is a sole shelter and provision for us all.

And even the chickens, their daily household voices and belongings, are knitted into the story of redemption. Write it down on the heart. It rains with tenderness like a summer evening cloud—"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not." Hush. Let our hearts weep. Ye feathered creatures of the sky and ground doubtless are set great store by of God, for Jesus paid heed to you.

And the dove which has dethroned the eagle has become the bird of God. And "he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him." Sing to the dawn, ye birds; and sing all the day, for Jesus has paid heed to your chiming with smiling eyes unforgettably.

The crowing cock whose clarion is a part of the kindly music of the fields, is set into the passion of God. The old-time churches summited them with a cock to remind us of our sin—Peter's sin and ours, and Peter's forgiveness. It is a reminder of our frailty and God's tenderness, which is as unfathomed as the morning light.

V

JESUS AND THE OPEN ROAD



AND what a journeyer Jesus was! Restlessness was in his feet. He could not stay long and must go far. He was born on a journey. His mother barely arrived at Bethlehem in time for him to be born.

Reading the gospel story, it appears that Jesus' life was a catalogue of arrivals and departures. His itinerary would make a road-book of Palestine in his days. The roadways pressed by his hastening feet went every whither where pain cried out for alleviation or sin for cleansing or heartaches for compassion.

Read the Open Road story of Jesus:

"And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be

delivered. And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn."

"And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt. . . . But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life. And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judæa in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee: and he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene."

"Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to

have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart."

"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him."

"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

"And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. . . . And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judæa, and from beyond Jordan."

"And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him."

"And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him. And, behold, two blind men sitting by the wayside, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David. And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David. And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you? They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him."

"Jesus of Nazareth passeth by."

"Let us go into the next towns."

"And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest."

"And they went to another village."

"And when they were come out of the ship, straightway they knew him, and ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was."

"And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole."

"Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe."

"And they took Jesus, and led him away."

"He bearing his cross went forth."

"Till I come."

"And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers deliv-

ered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulcher; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulcher, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight."

"And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how

he was known of them in breaking of bread. And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you."

"And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hand, and blessed them."

The open road is an adventure unspeakable, but withal it is a lonely road. The people on it are strangers to us and we to them. We pick up acquaintances and we need friends. A traveler is in necessity a lonely man. So far to go and go alone—that is the sobbing we hear. Christian in *The Pilgrim's Progress* started on the road alone. We are lone folks whether we will or no. The chance comer is the comrade of the road and in need a friend. Sickness, sorrow, pain, vast heartache are commonplaces of the road; and did we not read of the Great Traveler, that his only hospitality was a stable, and that he came unto his own things and his own folks did not receive him? Surely, that is part of this open road. "Nobody cares" is what we keep repeating like reiterant waves beating on the shore. And the road being undeniably such, we greatly need this Parable of the Open Road. How it changes the road! Read the parable. It is a revelation, a more than sunup.

And here is the immortal Parable of the Open Road:

"And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee."

The Open Road is now become the Friendly Road. We all know the Good Samaritan is Jesus. Somebody does care. Not some chance body, not some seldom comer, but the Frequenter of the Open Road. Night or day, in heat or cold, in sunlight or in shadow, when we need help most and the hand reached out, here he is. The Friend is beside. No longer the lonesome road, but forevermore the Friendly Road, Jesus. Jesus is saying, "I am the Way." Surely this is an Open Road. And the Good Samaritan, whose voice is so friendly, and whose hand is so

kindly, and who has ample leisure for every wounded or weary or lonesome traveler, says, like starlight speaking, "It is I; be not afraid." Oh, Open Road, thy hazard is so great and thy loneliness so lonely, but *now* the Traveler Unknown is traveling this way. I must take the road. 'Tis an adventure for eternity.

Mankind is born to the open road. We be journeyers by instinct and compulsion as migratory birds. The road invites. And we have a Companion of the journey. Some One who loves the road, knows it, has traveled it, loves it, who will hold converse with us as we make our way and give direction when we are unknowing. The dust of the road never brushed from his garments. He was in his goings like the speeding stars. Stardust was on his garments and the dust of Bethlehem. All we need know is that Jesus fares forth on the open road and we fare forth with him.

All adventures shall betide us. All streams crossed, all mountains topped, all voyages undertaken and with good success. Even skies shall have thoroughfare for his feet and ours.

I love to scan this open road of Jesus. No highway like it has ever opened to mortal feet. It is enchanting. It makes a weary foot in love with the road. Where he has smiled along the journey brings sunlight enough along that way to make perpetual daylight. And seeing this

open road I one day wrote this "Song of the Journey"; for the open road with the Great Journeyer must have its song.

A SONG OF THE JOURNEY

I am going on my journey, glad with joy from
dawn to dark,
With the spirit of the morning and the carol of
the lark:

I am drinking at those fountains whence the liv-
ing waters flow,

I am hearing heaven's music as along my way
I go.

And my heart is full of laughter, like the singing
of a psalm;

My sky bends blue above me with its winds of
evening balm;

And I know not any trouble, for I have the
Tempest's King

To change my Winter's fury to the gladness of
his Spring.

I have heard my Master calling, and his voice is
music sweet;

And he bids me march right forward, nor dream
of a retreat.

He says his Land of Beulah lies before me, out
of sight,

Where reigns the deathless daylight, never
shadowed by the night.

He bids me do my duty, though humble it may be,
And do what thing lies nearest in glad humility;

For Christ is one that serveth, and thinks no
service mean

That helps the world's endeavors to help its
heart be clean.

So I walk highways and byways; and my hands
 are rough with toil
As I try to make a garden out of hard, infertile
 soil,
But I see God's flowers a-growing where there
 grew no flowers before;
And my heart is full of gladness, as I work God's
 work the more.
Bless God! My lot is holy like a temple with
 its calm;
And I envy not an angel, with his harp-song and
 his palm,
For I am God's own helper; and he calls me by
 my name,
And says my work is holy as a sacrificial flame.

So I go along my journey, glad with joy from
 dawn to dark,
With the spirit of the morning and the carol
 of the lark,
For I drink at those bright fountains whence
 the living waters flow,
And I hear heaven's gladsome music as along
 my way I go.
And my heart is full of laughter, like the singing
 of a psalm;
My sky bends blue above me with its wind of
 evening balm;
And I know not any trouble, for I have the
 Tempest's King
To change my Winter's fury to the gladness of
 his Spring.

Ho, all journeyers, Jesus will take the Open
Road with you. "Coming!"

VI

JESUS AT WORK OUT-OF-DOORS



CAPTION which might be placed over every one of these doings of the Son of God should be one of his own shoreless sayings, to wit: "One of the days of the Son of man."

"And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment: for she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole. But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour. And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise, he said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose. And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land. And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou son of David, have mercy on us. And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him,

Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. And their eyes were opened: and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it."

"There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him. And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren?"

"And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold, my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother."

"And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him."

"And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great

prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people. And this rumor of him went forth throughout all Judæa, and throughout all the region round about."

"And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable. And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him."

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. . . . And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom; the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father, . . . send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore,

father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house : for I have five brethren ; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets ; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham : but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

"In the meantime when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say."

"And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment : and as many as touched him were made whole."

"Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was. Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judæa again. His disci-

ples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again? Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth because there is no light in him. These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him. Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him. Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already. Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off: and many of the Jews came to Martha, and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection,

and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world. And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come and calleth for thee. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she arose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, and said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. Jesus

saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I know that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go. Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him."

Here is the unforgettable parable of the fields, the pitiful story of the lost man:

"And he said, A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto

him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry."

No house in sight save the home from which the lost boy departed and the home to which the found boy returned. Out of doors was this story of the out-of-doors told, and it has gone abroad like the clouds and whispered at everybody's casement like the wind, and has brought an end to so many bodies' drought like the rain. There in plain sight of out-of-doors, far on the road to meet the prodigal, is the father, who when we look him in the face is seen to be Jesus. "He shall be called Jesus, for he saved his people from their sins."

Jesus was a workingman, and his work was mainly out under the sky. He was a carpenter, and carpenters in Galilee were mainly of the out-of-doors. His life for thirty years was lived on the hilltop of Nazareth, coming and going, as lad and Man, where the out-of-doors was his playground and dreaming place and carpenter's shop. What a place to have to work the out-of-doors is! There the weather is your work fellow. I doubt the men who are afield know what a blessed place they have. Indoors can never compare with the outdoors. The stateliest room ever erected by the skill of man is nothing compared with the roof of the sky. Little dingy rooms must perforce be places where many live their working days. But those who have the sky for canopy and the winds of the skies for their playfellows have a workroom which should make all the day long a delight. I have found it so. All weathers are good weathers out of doors. Heat, cold, wind, calm, rain, sleet, snow, I have myself experienced and delighted in them all. Not by theory but by knowledge I can say, "Very good."

If any painter knew how to paint a portrait of Jesus at work so as to gather into it all the work he customarily did, it would constitute a satisfactory work of art above anything we can imagine, and far above anything we possess. But the painter cannot. Christ was too multitudinous in his work and too multifarious. He was

not an ambidexter: he was thousand-handed. A fisherman can be painted, a sower can be painted, a shepherd can be painted, a carpenter can be painted, a plowman can be painted, a preacher can be painted, a teacher can be painted, a judge can be painted, a physician can be painted, a bridge-builder can be painted, a soldier can be painted, a poet can be painted, a seaman can be painted, a friend can be painted, and there is a word, the stumbling-block word for them all, but what master of color and imagination with painter's brush can be sufficient to paint it? Wellington is easy to paint—a Waterloo, he amidst his carnage and bleeding men and broken cannons—we cannot mistake him. Grant we can paint at Appomattox, with his wonder of soldier magnanimity refusing to accept his opponent's sword. Longfellow can be painted with his poet-look lying dead among his books, but—that word again—rebuffs us like a winter sea wave. How can we paint the Builder of mountains and the Maker of suns and the Forgiver of sin, and the Resurrection and the Life, at work doing all kinds of humble, human, sublime things. How paint the turner of the world up side down and the turner of the world right side up, and the Brusher away of widows' tears, and a blind man's Oculist?

We have witnessed men at work with sweaty faces, but not until now The Man at work work-

ing to undo sin till the sweat was blood and burned red in the dark.

Always Jesus was a man of the sky. Always his purposeless inclination led him out of doors to his day's work. It keeps surprising us how little he was under a roof for every purpose. Travel was on him; preaching was on him; healing was on him; lifting sunups on men's souls was on him out where the sky was visible and the sun and the whisperless stars. Surely, he was a Sower who cannot feed the hunger of the world except he be out with bare feet pressing the new-plowed ground, and bared breast pressed with the touch of wind, and brown hands touching the seed and flinging it to earth and winds with rhythmic skill until he seeded the harvests of wheat sufficient to satisfy the hunger of the whole world. He was out under the sky at work. No church could hold his audience, so he makes the sky his temple and the hill or a boat his pulpit, or the green sward. He is building the cathedral of the human soul and is out under the sky to build it. He is healing such multitudes that if there were hospitals (and there were none until after he came and by healing taught the world to heal) they would not have sufficed. Out bringing blind souls into the light of gospel, at work out of doors.

Over this chapter is inscribed the legend, "One of the days of the Son of man"; and at this chapter's closing, having seen Jesus at his day's

work, we can but write his immortal invitation, "Come unto me all that labor," which looks straight into the eyes of his revelational "My Father worketh hitherto."

So is God the untiring Workingman who will toil on until there are a new heavens and a new earth; and then his glad labors shall have just begun.

Meantime Jesus "bearing his cross goes forth" under the sky in his work of redemption—triumphantly "tasting death for every man."

And writ in blood forever is the Name, "Jesus the Servant of All."

VII

JESUS AND THE RIVER

“**T**HERE is a river.”

“Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now.”

“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.”

“There is a river.” This proclamation suffices to open a door of dreams. A river! God made a river. It might not have been. A riverless world is an imaginable thing. A riverless world had subtracted immeasurably from the wonder of our earth. We need not imagine it. We should break our hearts now, knowing what rivers are, not to possess them. God has insured us against this tragedy. Suppose the name of streams great and small were to be written down, what an all but interminable list should be before us! What a branch they afford on which the bird of imagination may perch, from which to lift wing into the sky! Rivers are not more thoroughfares for ships than they are thoroughfares for dreams, nor so much. We might have

had the earth watered parsimoniously—just enough to rain upon the fields, and by economy give drink to all living things. It is not so. We may thank God for this, another evidence of his generosity. He maketh the rivers to run into the sea. He fills fountains in such measure that all the year round the rivers are replenished and roll majestic flood through hundreds of miles of variegated scenery and proffer sites for cities and egress from cities. Save Jerusalem, no chief city of the world but is builded on a river or a confluent of the sea. Cities must have drink. They famish without ample fountains at which populations slake their feverish thirst. Find a locality where water may not be had in abundance and you can certify no multitude of inhabitants can ever cluster there. This is the ultimate and absolute inhibition. The Romans built stately aqueducts which spanned valleys, the ruins of which now constitute one of the wonders of the world. Moderns build their aqueducts underground. These invisible waterways are one of our chief modern philanthropies. The ample water supply of modern times suffices to make us glad we are dwellers in these later times. Plenty of water—what can exceed that for comfort and cleanliness and well-being?

A river is God's proffered drinking place for the world. It put aqueducts into the human mind. We learn everything from God. "There is a river."

"There is a river." It is nameless. That appears to me to be a happy consideration. Just a river. God makes them: man names them. To let the eye wander over the fascinating thing called a map and read the names God's rivers bear is full of interest and illumination. Streams are named for men and tribes and chance incidents. Some names are so antique that we know nothing of their origin. Genesis recorded that our first ancestor named the things God had created as they passed before him. It is a keen observation, indicating the ability of man and his inability also. Man could name: he could not make—that is how the case still stands. Who can get at the secret of the rivers? We can make a geography set down their meanderings. With these we are acquainted. Where their remotest sources are men have found. Where Mississippi heads in Itasca we know. Where the Nile has its beginning, the Bakers, Peakes, Livingstones have searched and found. The secret, however, remains as of yore and is as we had no knowledge of their source. The rivers are the perennial secret. Not how the Nile overflows, but how the Nile with Sahara for its neighbor, keeps flowing on while the centuries die away, is our quest. As man stood and looked on the waters, pressing steadily downward and outward to the sea, so it is this day. The flood may diminish but it does not discontinue. The Tiber great Cæsar knew still makes its certain

way outward. No cessation, no retardation. Rome is memory-haunted, fatigued by sheer weight of immense events, and stumbles and mumbles like an old man in his dotage. The Tiber is not so. It has no senility. It seems new born. The faces of the thousands of years are merged in its flood and not an image remains. It was temporary photography. The river cared not nor tried to hold a single face in mind. It cared not for Cæsar nor his sword and battalions, nor Cicero with his stylus and his eloquence, nor all the emperors, nor that greater than emperor, Saul of Tarsus. They were of no concern to the moving, mysterious river, and gave not more heed than the sky to the passing bird.

I have watched the Potomac at Mount Vernon, where it makes a sudden turn as if to face for a moment the grave of that patriot all history loves so well. Washington loved that stately river and dwelt on a bluff with its outlook of which no lover of scenery could ever tire, and there he died and there is he buried. 'Tis a fitting spot for the great patriot's burial. A cathedral were an inauspicious place in comparison, lacking in room and majesty. As long as rivers flow, so long will the Potomac waters make salutation to that royal republican whose services are more renowned than those of all the emperors of Rome and Pharaohs of Egypt.

And the river never sleeps, never intermits,

nor loses its way in the dark. In vast reticence never tells whence it comes nor intimates its purposed destination, never pauses as if uncertain, but, like the stream of the stars that nightly flow across the heavens, the river holds its course. What river? The Potomac? No, no. "There is a river." That is the magic stream. That is the nameless watercourse that flows across the mellow landscape of our dreams, flooded with morning splendor, flashed on by a million noons, drenched with wine-red of the million sunsets—"There is a river." Let that suffice. The haunting of any river is on any river. And how good that is! Some have sources very high among craggy Himalayas, Rockies, Andes, Apennines, Alps: some are prairie born and barely move, like a wounded soldier, yet is each a river, the maker whereof is God.

The Danube, the Volga, the Amazon, the Yangtze-kiang, the Colorado, the Hudson, the Ohio, the Columbia, the Sacramento, the Tagus, the Ganges, the Thames! Swing open these gates of wonder. All history has stood on your banks and peered into your unfitful currents. Races of men and birds have their periods of migration, but they are transitory episodes. Ye rivers are never ending in flow. Your migrations are not intermittent but persistent as the drift of stars.

Not in their immense volume of water whereof we speak constitutes the never-ending charm of the river. As between the great river and what

the poet-fisherman, Henry Van Dyke, has named little rivers, is a difference in magnitude only. What the little rivers lack in size they more than make up in picturesque loveliness. For all rivers I will openly declare my love. They place such a charm on the landscape of continents and memory as in dim morning's dawning while the spirit drifts between the night and the day, between slumber and wakening. I see so many little rivers and brawling streams and mere threads of silver in the grass and tide waters running inland from the sea. The muddy, slow streams on the prairies or the noisy streams in the clefts of the mountain chasm, silent waters, rollicking waters, rainbowed waterfalls, huge Niagaras thundering with diapasons majestic as the ocean—all are rivers in the eyes of God and in the eyes of such as know where God's eyes are turning.

To the solitary river of Palestine Jesus' footsteps turned. No brook or river companioned with his boyhood. He was a hill man and not a river man. And those Nazareth hills were as dry as summer streams. His Boy's ear never was attuned to the voices of laughing waters. None the less when he is man, his religious pathway leads him to the Jordan, where there was "much water," as the eyewitness has it. And there among the crowd, not as an onlooker but as participant, he hears the voice of John, high-keyed like a locust-call, strenuous, proclamatory,

calling the people to the River Jordan. All who needed what they had not, which was a clean heart, were bidden abruptly and with no persiflage to repent; and the banks of the river flung back the raucous desert voice of the desert man who was not a reed shaken by the wind but a granite rock—a voice like a rock-borne echo came back, “Repent!” Helmeted soldiers, with spear in hand, and men from Moab and inhabitants of Jerusalem and people from Galilee, gathering at the Jordan answering to a voice that calls and calls till the echoes awaken and reverberate like a bronze battle trumpet, saying reitedly, “Repent! repent!”

And those who came had surely need of repentance. They are all kinsmen in sin. They know when the preacher speaks that it is of them he preached. In their hearts they knew themselves unclean. It is so still. Sane men must know themselves sinners. We cannot ignore our sins, seeing we must live with ourselves. And with the elbowing crowd came a calm Man to the preacher with the perceiving eyes and the voice, as one who had walked from some star very far off and was on his way to some other star very far off. A celestial look was in his eyes and on his lips. He seemed to irradiate laughter even when he did not smile. “Repent! repent!” clari-
oned the preacher while this calm Man came calmly, yet surely, on. The preacher knew this Man was not of those men. Doubtless he had

come as spectator, not participant. He had no need to come, for this invitation was not for him. But he came as certain as the approach of the sun. And the preacher with his heart of worship and his eyes of prayer kept calling in his heart, "Behold the Lamb of God." But this strange, wistful Man came steadily onward. He came as if he answered to the preacher's "Repent!" And there stood John with his uplifted hyssop branch dipped in the Jordan stream sprinkling the multitude of penitents. Somehow the crowd stayed. There was a hush and a peace like a bird's wing stilled in mid-sky, and then a colloquy whose dialogue sounds in our ears like running water. The preacher hushed his voice till it became a caress and the Comer's words were like a song in the dusk. "But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now." And the lifted hyssop branch on which the water of the Jordan River was beaded like dew trembled, and the chrism descended on the forehead of the great Solitary, who stood in the running stream, and while the baptismal drops shined on his face and hair, he turned him to the shore, and the preacher saw the Spirit like a dove descend upon him. And with face all rapture the preacher seemed to sing, not say, "He must increase, but I must decrease."

How that scene stands etched on our hearts!

"Suffer it to be so now," is in our ears like a Christmas bell a-ringing, and then the voice from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Music of the earth and music of the sky while the Jordan rolls majestically on.

"There is a river"—and Jesus came to Jordan. When had a river been visited of God? This is the sacred Jordan hereafter, for its waters have laved the feet of God. When had a river been visited of God? queried we. 'Twas a foolish question, very witless. When has a river not been visited of God? He haunts all streams. He knows all the rivers by name. Every water-course is known to him and dear to him. He has lavished a wealth of loving and captivating painstaking such as no artist ever gives his master painting. In heedless, headlong loveliness the streams by the ten thousands run in disheveled grace like a woman's hair flying in the wind. It is an endless cycle of music, waywardness, shadow of rock and forest and tangle of vines and roots, and islands of bowlders which neglectful mountains let fall in the dark. They flow gently like Sweet Avon. They grow fantastic like dervishes. They hurl themselves like madmen. They rush betimes like the rapids of Niagara and betimes tangle and anguish like souls in hell, as the gorge of Niagara. They widen like the Saint Lawrence at Labrador. They fall into death stupor as the Colorado river does.

And the little streams, those playful make-believes of rivers that perform incredible feats of daring and vagabondry and beauty, playing hide and seek with the sun, finding no place of peace nor seeking any, baffling all attempts of man to convey the loveliness they are in words or pictures, laughing as to say, "I dare you to catch my fleeting grace," and we are hopelessly inadequate as one who would delay a cataract of stars.

God at the rivers laving his feet in the hurrying current elate in their iridescent tints, surprised at the jugglery of their versatility, although himself the Juggler who framed all those combinations of beauty. "There is a river." Lead me to that river. Jesus came to the Jordan and stood in that stream for a moment to get in touch with man and to stay in touch with God.

And a holy Man saw the River of Life running across the landscape of eternity! By these earthly rivers have we dwelt or dawdled, or waited or sung or floated or sobbed, have at them wondered and by them wandered and in them rejoiced.

And on the banks of the River of Life, pure as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb, shaded on either bank by the evergreen trees of life, we shall wonder and wander and worship against the deathless days, and there we shall encounter Jesus forever.

VIII

JESUS AND THE SHEEP.

“**A**ND there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock.”

“What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.”

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.”

"This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."

"The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." "In the midst of the elders stood a Lamb as it had been slain." "Made them white in the blood of the Lamb." "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them." "They over-

came him by the blood of the Lamb." "The Lamb could open the book." "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

For composite poetry, these Gospel references to sheep seem to me past all praise. They surpass imagination. A lamb is picturesque and clinging in its helplessness, and to suppose it could be lifted up to the pinnacle of sublimity would appear incredible. Jesus has taken a trivial creature and made it a symbol of himself and has enthroned it in the eternities. He has taken the lowly shepherd and made him a symbol of the Saviour of the world.

I view these shepherd-and-sheep passages with shining eyes. They drench my heart with a wild rain of tears, howbeit tears of gratitude and love and praise and adoration. Poetry cannot fit its lips to such melody nor touch its hand to such a harp. We may begin this recitation in no special mood of reverence, and just a step further and we are swimming in a sea of redemption. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

Never again can I look on or see a spring pasture with a flock of sheep feeding without having the sleeve of my memory and imagination plucked and my spirit called to prayer. They have gotten into the blood of my dream life and my devout life. They feed on all the highlands of the heart. I never see sheep from a flying train in field or fold without watching them as

long as my eye can catch trace of them. They do not raise thoughts of commercial value and clothing and food. They are that. They are humanity's chief utility. We use them so constantly. They serve us with never a thought of service and never a glimpse of the riches they are. Life is sweet to them. Brief though it is, they are not cognizant of its brevity. They take no note of time. Animals have no timepiece with which to measure duration. A day may be as long to them as eternity, and an eternity might be as brief to them as a winter day. Of these things we are profoundly ignorant. However mysterious man may be to animals, he is not more mysterious to them than they to him, save that man wonders about them and they have no wonder about him.

I have a picture which satisfies me as few pictures in the world of artistry do. It cost little or I had not been possessor of it. The artist, I doubt not, dashed it off roughly like the sea were swelling up against a rock. Yet I have watched it in every stage of light—in morning light, in glare of noon light, in wash of afternoon radiancy, in gathering shadows of evening, each light serving to give it new meaning. I watch it when Winter blows and beats with his clenched fists of storm. I watch it when ashen color saddens all the sky. I watch it when Summer leans once more arduous, sweaty face to its amazing toils. I watch it when Spring flings

about her fair form her robe of green and fastens it with dandelions and violets. I watch it when my heart is at laughter like laughing brooks. I watch it when my heart is lonely as an empty songbird's nest. I watch it when my grief for friends lost but not forgotten is as a lonely wind. I watch it. It beckons me when I am absent. I want to see that picture. Great pictures have I seen in private collections and in art galleries abroad and at home, and this little picture in our own little home comforts me so that I do not miss these noble canvases.

This is the picture: It is spring and the grass on the hill slope is a new green and very vivid, so that I want to go and lie full length upon it. A thicket of plum trees and other growth of little height are on the climb of the hill, and the leaves are newly unfolded and on others the buds are flashed as in surprise with a look a little like lilies, and very fair to see. Beyond the little ascent, and at a goodly distance is a climb like an imitation mountain. There are sweet glimpses; the blue is drifted across by a cloud like fine lace, and beyond the hill and on the mountain a rain cloud surlily drifts. The day makes me want to play truant and run with winged feet in the new springtime. And on the slope of the hill near at hand, I hear the bleating of sheep. Five only, but they fit the picture and the scene, and complete it. They satisfy the landscape and the heart. Two lie down in

sheer content so that the sweet song of the long ago bubbles to the lips unbidden: "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures." One lies with his head near recumbent. One stands as if looking inland toward the distant mountain. A lamb stands, head turned toward the spring thicket. Without them we feel the picture had been incomplete, though we should not have known it. With them there the picture satisfies so that we draw a contented sigh. The sheep, white as a cloud, against the sweet new green—and I think of the Shepherd Psalm, and I see the Shepherd Christ.

A review of paintings as here seen discloses how sheep have appealed to painters. The shepherd and his sheep seem to beckon such as have gift in color. Sheep are so susceptible to leading, so needing to be led, so helpless, so prone to destruction without shepherding. Cattle and horses have lived, thriven, and multiplied without man's care. Without man sheep become extinct. We drive cattle: we lead sheep. These witless helplessnesses know the master's voice, respond to it, know their own names and answer to them. Thus it comes that these poor sheep, so absolutely lacking in any ability to battle for themselves, instead of becoming extinct, are increasing in numbers, while the wild beast which battles for existence is dying out and all but facing extinction.

Sheep mean folk. Somebody cares for them.

They are not far from a friend. They need man and man needs them. In a way their faces are ever turned homeward. A shepherd leading his flock brings on our spirits a peace and calm hard to account for and needing no such accounting for. It is so. The friend of God—Abraham—long ago was shepherd and dwelt in a tent; and Shepherd David thrummed on his harp to the quiet sheep; and the lambs played, wild with joy, to the rain drip of his music.

Sheep, food for man and garmenting for man, had rendered sufficient service in all reason. We could not ask for more. Yet they render more. When sacrifices were offered these mild animals spoke for the sinner. They had a high relation to God in the redemption of mankind.

The shepherds of Bethlehem on that first Christmas night, when they were shepherding the sheep for sacrifice, that hallowed night the sheep little knew, and the shepherds as little knew, that the Lamb of God was come, whose death was to make the blood of lambs unneedful henceforth alway.

The parable of the lost sheep drips with the pathos of the lost and the beauty of the shepherd. It may never get out of our sight—the shepherd going in darkness and in story—all the places where the lost, bleating sheep might have taken a zigzag bypath in the night, and at the last wearing it above his heart—the wee lost lamb, as is told in this poem by Sarah Pratt McLean

Greene, one of the holiest Christian voices of the ages:

DE MASSA OB DE SHEEPFOL'¹

De massa ob de sheepfol'
 Dat gaurds de sheepfol' bin,
 Look out to de gloomerin' meadows,
 Wha'r de long night rain begin—
 So he call to de hirelin' shepa'd,
 "Is my sheep, is dey all come in?—
 My sheep, is dey all come in?"

Oh den, says de hirelin' shepa'd:
 "Dey's some, dey's black and thin,
 And some, dey's po' ol' wedda's,
 Dat can't come home agin.
 Dey's some black sheep an' ol' wedda's,
 But de res', dey's all brung in.—
 De res', dey's all brung in."

Den de massa ob de sheepfol',
 Dat gaurds de sheepfol' bin,
 Goes down in de gloomerin' meadows,
 Wha'r de long night rain begin—
 So he le' down de ba's ob de sheepfol',
 Callin' sof', "Come in. Come in."
 Callin' sof', "Come in. Come in."

Den up t'ro' de gloomerin' meadows,
 T'ro' de col' night rain and win',
 And up t'ro' de gloomerin' rain-paf',
 Wha'r de sleet fa' pie'cin' thin,
 De po' los' sheep ob de sheepfol',
 Dey all comes gadderin' in.
 De po' los' sheep ob de sheepfol',
 Dey all comes gadderin' in.

¹ Used by permission of author.

The poem catches a part of this incalculable tenderness of shepherding. I think the whole poem-story will abide while sinful men are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb of God and are shepherded by the beautiful Shepherd; through all time this poem will be read and eyes will drip with love like the rain through which the Shepherd went on his quest. How gently the rainy tears mix with the wind in the poem.

These sayings of Jesus in which he identifies himself with the sheep and the shepherd hold us like a tender hand and strong. Outdoors the sheep pasture—outdoors where the winds blow soft and hot and free, where they may find fair pastures: it is the shepherd leads them; and if they find safe folding, it is the shepherd leads them home.

“Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good will to give you the kingdom,” is a word of courage which is qualified to defy all their adversaries. The Father’s good will is abundant reply for all the wolf’s marauding. The Lamb succeeds. It is the Lamb that is on the throne. The wolves may well make the most of their surly night. They shall have no admission to the day where no night is.

Sheep and shepherd were the solitary witnesses of that celestial visitation to salute the Jesus, who was to “save his people from their sins.” In the cattle manger he lay, and from the shepherds came the first worshipers and the

adoration of the gentle Jesus, whose meek might was to throw down the seats of the mighty and to deluge the earth with the rule of good will and the dominion of the spirit. It all seems like fitting parts of an oratorio, the most rapturous to which time and eternity ever listened. Shepherd and sheep have found themselves in the organ loft of the ages.

Those that serve unnoted shall be held in the eternal remembrance of God is what these pastoral parables sing out like chiming streams. God greatly cares for services from such as seek not their own but the welfare of others. The Lamb of God shepherds his sheep in the flesh and leadeth them out. We are outward bound—not shut in nor shut out, but herd in God's out-of-doors forever while the shepherd and his meek and lowly flock range the perpetual mountains. So does God hearten all lonely hearts that humbly strive to humbly serve.

The battle voice and the wild wolf bark die out. They are as if they had never been. Their gnashing teeth are a fear no more. But the pasture and the sweet hill winds blowing, and the river of life flowing gently by, and the balmy sky with rain and storm cloud climbing up its long steep, and the Shepherd Voice "calling his own sheep by name" abide forever.

That minstreling shall prove the deepest melody heaven shall hear.

"I am the Good Shepherd." "Behold the Lamb

of God that taketh away the sins of the world."

"I saw a Lamb in the midst of the throne." What is there for the redeemed flock to say but "Hallelujah"? The Shepherd leadeth beside still waters and in green pastures. And there is no night there!

IX

JESUS AND THE WIND

THE wind bloweth where it listeth,
and thou hearest the sound thereof,
but canst not tell whence it cometh,
and whither it goeth : so is every one that is
born of the Spirit."

"The wind was contrary."

"And the wind blew and"

"There came down a storm of wind upon
the lake."

"When ye see the south wind blow."

Jesus put a caressing hand on the shoulder of the wind. I will bless him for that as for so many beautiful things he did. He omitted nothing of loveliness. He might have omitted a caress for the wind as he might have omitted a caressing look and word and benediction for little children. He omitted neither. On both of them his caress abides. And what he caressed by voice or hand speeds its way to immortality.

If anybody love a book, have we not observed how when a voice of appreciation or of praise for that book is spoken, no matter by whom, it makes the heart beat smilingly? Or if we love a place, when somebody speaks radiantly of that locality, how that person is never the same to us afterward? The appreciative word spoken of

the place we love ensconces the utterer thereof in our hearts, so that always our every remembrance of the speaker kindles a glow on our hearth. And when we love anybody a word of love for that body spoken by a chance passer on the street whose name we did not know and do not know, will make us string that nameless wayfarer on our rosary forever more.

And the winds—I love them so that had the Master given them no visible heed, I should have felt the lack with a sense of loss. Certainly, I should have known that he was passing swiftly and on a longer journey than anyone ever made, and that in the multiplicity of his activities no room was left for this thing he omitted, and that little things must give way for larger things. All this I had been wise enough to know. Yet had the lack touched me with a momentary grief like a stray raindrop.

And he did not forget or neglect or esteem the wind a negligible thing. My wind, thou hast not been forgotten by thy God and mine.

What a different place earth would have been to dwell in had God forgotten or refrained from creating the wind! Such witchery is in it, and on what it does, and how it does. It splashes us as with a spray of moonlight. Imagine a world where no wind ever stirred a leaf or a wave. Imagine a world where eternal calm held sway, an ocean with never a ripple on it, and trees that never rocked, and a summer or springtime where

sultry day and sultry dark with no breeze to temper the heat—plainly such a world could have been provided and we had been none the wiser. But what a disappointed world! “The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner” presents a becalmed ocean—a world from which the wind had withdrawn. No wonder the desolation bit like a fierce sword into their souls. The sails hung limp as a dead bird’s wings. A feather on the ship’s deck was not fluttered; no lapping of the waves on the ship’s prow or sides; a becalmed ship on a becalmed sea. The ocean was as still as the sky. The thing that followed was the pathos of a world that should not have known the touch of wind. Those sailors swooned of apathy. They were a listless island in a sea that had no port of shore. As usual, it was the poet who saw things. He did not know he saw. The tragedy Poet Coleridge describes is not a tragedy of the Ancient Mariner; it is the tragedy of a windless world. It is the tragedy of all men had the wind been bungled in making. Let us draw easy breath. It was not bungled in the making. The eternal Pneuma is the Maker, and he breathes on the world. He created the winds; and the world’s oceans are not those of the Ancient Mariner—it is our ocean touched by gentle zephyrs or hit by stormy winds. “He holdeth the winds in his fists.” In the skies of Jesus the winds blew. There, come quiet winds; “as they sailed” the winds were awake on the night waters. And

poetry is on the night and sea; for Jesus is there with them both.

What thousands of recollections imperishable for beauty does the mention of the wind waken! It takes us by the hand and leads us afield for a lifetime, and tells us tales more sweet than the story writers do.

The winds of childhood blow in our faces and bring voices that are long since silenced by death, voices of other children, voices of mothers singing babies to sleep, voices of fathers calling from the field, voices, mayhap, of battle which left children fatherless, or a sob that all the years cannot silence, the sob when we look on a dead sweet mother's face long gone but never forgot. And voices of youth, the joyful laughter at games and on holidays, and glad companionships interminable as eternity, and voices which seemed to have no room for sorrow, voices of greeting but not of farewell nor of foreboding. And voices of manhood and womanhood and love spoken and answered to and golden wedding bells rung by happy hands and hearts, and voices of labor, and the thronged streets, and the babies' coo and cry and laughter, and the tumult of the factories and their thunder, and the farmers afield sowing the grain that feeds the world—those voices were on the winds from all quarters of the sky of life. O, the brave blowing winds!

The summer winds laden with the precious

perfume of ripened fruit and trees in abundant leaf, and hayfields and the hot, happy August breath of promise that harvests shall make glad the heart of man, and famine shall not slay the world, and cedar trees swooning in the heat give out odors which fairly soak the air in the torrid day, and the slow wind pushes with both its hot hands like the hands of love, or a swift wind. The wind "Shoulders the pillared dust," as Browning saw and said, and as I have seen so often in the sultry noon of August, whirling down the long stretch of dusty road and spiraling at last in the sky; the hot wind which visits every growing summer thing, and kisses with its lips the pollen and odors as if it would be drunk at their fountains of incense; the hot wind of August bearing abroad the locusts' shrill cry of joy and thanksgiving for the midsummer mercy of heat, while panting herds lie in the shadows or stand knee deep in the pools.

And the fall wind blows when the blue haze mantles the distant hills and blurs the distant valleys, and drives over stacks of hay and lonely fields of shocked corn and through the trees with leaf-fall rife; taking a souvenir from every branch if it may, and wanders in woodland ravines, wading in the meditative leaves, and always with breath scented with the precious fragrance of fallen leaves or leaves about to fall, and calls wearily to every treetop and every casement and to every wondering branch that once

was green and to every field of ripened corn: "Farewell, farewell. I am the melody of things that were. Hail and farewell." And its voice is so sad that all who hear have tears in their hearts or dew on their eyelashes—it is the melody of things that were. Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, green leaf to sear leaf; and the leaves sob, "We, about to die, salute you," and the red birds are mute. They cannot lift the song when the fall wind is blowing the loneliness of salutation of the falling leaves.

The winter wind is in the naked, deciduous trees and is wailing through the pine tops with pitiful but un pitying voice and blowing, bitter and blind, over all the breadth of snowy fields and through the shocks of corn, where the snows drift and stay, and down long ravines of desolation where flowers were and the green grass smiled, and over the bleak mountain tops men cannot scale, but where winter winds fly unhinderable as death, and the chimneys moan and the winds try every door and window and resent being shut out in their own shivering dark—winter winds which tyrannize over the earth, and, because no man says them "no," bluster and swagger like blind men drunk. Yet what orchestral music! What unassuageable pain is in their voice! How they whine as no violin has ever done! How they sob as no 'cello can anguish! An eternal pain makes so much wild music and terrestrial despairing melody. I cannot tell what

a joy to me winter winds are, and have been for a lifetime. I frequent the naked woods when the snows are deep and the air biting and the crows cease their garrulity for a wonder, and listen to the voice of the brazen trumpet of the winter winds blowing a million battle charges into death. When winter winds are abroad and vociferous it seems self-evident winter will be perpetual. There will be no room for summer winds or springtime flower or sowing. This tyranny is destined to perpetuity. Farewell, you days of leaf and perfume and gentle summons of the sweet south winds. Ye are things of the world that shall be no more.

And—the spring winds in the night! I catch the smell of grass beginning to grow and the night wind brings the voice of the frog from the marsh, nor is there a sweeter spring sound. The windflowers are nodding wildly in the wind. The May apple cannot be quiet nor help blooming with their white wonder of blossom. There is no quiet. The spring wind will not lie down to sleep. It is not easy to blow winter weather out and spring weather in. It well may be no laggard. It has a tender heart and a man's hand and a haunting presence and a thousand intonations, and all of them intonations of life and brooding and wooing. It must call the robins back and the wild goose far away. "It is time to fly north," it whispers. Should you think so low a call could be heard across the world?

The swallows have heard it, and the bobolinks and the orioles. The spring wind is blowing and leaning low to kiss the cheeks of violets and singing to kiss the lips of apple blossoms and calling green leaves back to trees. O, wind, west wind, spring wind, "If winter comes, can spring be far behind?"

The winds from the far places of the world—the desert wind, prairie wind, the mountain wind, the sea wind, the marsh wind—how they tug at the heart like the hands of love! The poets have hearkened to the winds and answered them in their own speech, yet never poet's words measure up in sweetness and wistfulness to the many voices of the wind. Till the last wind falls asleep on the last evening of the world poets will be trying to express in words what the winds have uttered without words. There can be no minstrelsy like the minstrelsy of winds.

The hill winds—how they dream of peaks invisible and lonely gorges with their shadows fast asleep at noon, and spaces of loneliness sad with grief, and grouped pines and cedars full of incense and larches and mountain laurel, and rhododendrons with their unwithering green and their flowers very fair to see! The hill winds are blowing.

The prairie winds, with the meadow lark's voice, and the curlew's call, and the perfume of green grasses, and the sense of far distances unafraid; and the wolf's cry in the night, and the

cattle herds browsing with contented hearts all day and half the night! The prairie winds are at home with dawns and moonrise, and the dusk and prairie violets, and the beds of streams drained dry by the drought or burned dry by the wind, and know where the larks build their hidden nests and the quail shepherd their coveys, and the prairie chickens are lost from sight in the brown prairie grass in winter. Prairie winds that freight them with the odor of spring green and the full-grown green so that we cannot choose between perfumes that are so sweet.

The sea wind, with its feet wet with the surges of the unbaffleable sea, with its voice which has caught music from hearing the waves sing on the shores of all the earth, with its loneliness unfathomable for sadness, learned from seeing the multitude of seagoing men sprawl on the ocean's waves to die, clean from long neighboring with the salt and cleansing sea, with its knowledge of all shores and all ships and bearing the polyglottal speech of the races of mankind; sea dirge, sea dreams, sea anguish, sea laughter and rejoicing, hearing all, forgetting naught, fraught with all the sea voices of all the ages since seas were, and rolling their solemn waves from shore to shore. The necromancy of the sea wind!

Jesus attuned all their voices, gave them all their mandate, taught them all their mystery, and has compassed all they are in his word to the seeker by night. While the voice of the seeker-for-

truth is low and hushed in its utterance, I think the night wind blew through the windows and touched Jesus' face with its caressing hand. The ocean wind blew again, the hill winds of Nazareth when on many an evening, as the gloaming settled on the Nazareth hill and the early stars were lit, he as lad and man had felt the slow, sweet blowing of the west wind which had spent the day upon the sea and would fain spend the starlight on the land. And its subtle sweetness drifted across his spirit and his memory now while the grown seeker makes slow quest for God. The evening wind and the evening sky and the weary heart—the wind is gently blowing. The mysterious wind shall have its chrism at the hand of God by making it the symbol of the new birth of the Spirit. Ah, wind, ah, wind, thy God had his hand upon thy brow and thou art forever blest. Here is benediction: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh nor whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

Wind, wind, mystery art thou, but thy hand is caught in the palm of the higher Mystery. Thou art symbol of thy God. "So is every one that is born of the spirit." Amen. The baptism of the wind is concluded. The service ends. The night has its stars and under the stars unfretting and unwearying blows the wind.

It is the wind of God.

X

JESUS AND THE SOWER

“**T**HEN saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.”

“At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungered, and began to pluck the ears of corn and to eat.”

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”

“And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; and when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up: some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: but other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.”

“Another parable put he forth unto them,

saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."

"And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully."

"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat."

"First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."

"Having put his hand to the plow."

"His servant plowing in the field with the cattle."

The sower is a figure both poetical and practical, is so now and, I think, must ever remain so. He is always marching across the spring field, new-plowed, and the earth smell is in the

wind, and the blackbirds follow after him, and the blessed spring sky leans over him; and that is material for eternal poetry.

Now, the practical value of the sower is not hard to discover. He is the man who feeds the world. It is worth anybody's careful consideration that the greatest physical catastrophe which could possibly transpire is that the sower should, for any cause whatsoever, stop before his sowing is completed. Sometimes we think the earthquake's shock on the globe and the huge sea-wall wave that crushes up and dashes out and washes fleets up and crushes them together as if they were nothings, account a catastrophe. And it is. And when we think of catastrophes we think of the conflagration of a city, and when we may think of something more terrific, the conflagration of a planet, when a wild wave of fire dashes frantically across the earth. Nothing can stop it. It hears no cry for mercy. It is pitiless as an infernal doom. It is a catastrophe. Or we account that if the sun should die, all of its heat burn down to a memory of flame, all its hearth-stone cold as frozen winter—and this world were cold as a frozen ocean, that would be terrific. We are right. It would be a catastrophe of the most appalling order.

Or while this world-ship of ours voyages through the spaces, if some planet out of orbit should have head-on collision with us—a streak of flame and a jolt, and a world that had been

would be no more. These, everybody can see, are catastrophes, dire and utter. But I call you to mark that as a matter of simple truth no catastrophe would be quite so appalling in its terrific quality as the catastrophe of no sower. All the world needs to be wrecked is that the sower quit business one season. There never is crop enough raised in the fields of earth at any one harvest to last two winters for the world. If for any reason whatsoever there should be no crop raised throughout the planet for one solitary summer, then the world would be starved to death. And I think we must all agree we had not quite thought out this dire catastrophe of no sower with his toiling hands. If the sower grew indignant and should strike; if the sower grew indolent and would not sow; if the sower grew peevish and would not rejoice in his toil—if for any reason whatsoever the sower's hands did not dig in the ground, singing as he worked, and cast the seed out over the new-plowed fields, then the earth would be starved, every ship that floated on the sea would carry simply a luggage of whitened, bleached bones. Every city would be a habitation of death. The sower of seed is the philanthropist of the world.

Now, I think we have probably mismanaged our lexicon a trifle in that we thought the philanthropist was the man who simply gave with no return. And I agree with you that he is a beautiful character, and she is a beautiful

character. But they, too, are philanthropists who grow food for the many, those who sow and reap. Who buy their seed and sell their crop are not thereby released from the beautiful bondage and serenity of being philanthropists for the world. Because a man buys somewhat and sows somewhat and reaps somewhat and sells somewhat is no reason why he is not still a philanthropist. And it is a thing for all of us to learn so we never can forget it that people who give employment to great multitudes are doing the finest conceivable form of philanthropy. The best philanthropy of life is to give opportunity to people to earn a livelihood, not to give people a livelihood. Ten thousand times better it is to give employment for bread than to give bread. One drop of sweat mixed with the dough renders the bread sweet. And great railroad institutions that thrill with their fingers of fire to the edges of the continent, and pass the commerce of a whole planet across its mountains and plains, are a philanthropy of giving the world work. The great institutions of Chicago, or any place whatsoever, that employ thousands, and five thousands, and ten thousands, and fifty thousands of men, these are institutions to be set down in the good book in which philanthropies are written. And the street-railway system, which employs men by the multitudes, is a great institution, in the providence of God, for the enrichment of those who own the stocks

and those who labor. These things are a philanthropy.

And the sower is not relegated to hard-handed penuriousness because he pays for his seed and sells his crop. This sower going forth to sow the seed may not be gross and narrow. And for my own part, both now and always, I stand to rejoice in the man or woman who builds institutions that give honorable work for honorable men and honorable women, to employ their hands in every brain thing and every heart thing. And the sower going forth to sow is sowing the breakfasts for the world. God bless him for that! And the sower who goes forth to sow is sowing the dinners for the world. Bless him for that! And the sower who goes forth to sow is sowing suppers for the world, so that no child need go to bed hungry calling for a crust of bread. And the sower—how strong he is, how very clear he is in his intention to serve the world! How he understands this world, reaches out and digs its soils and its loam, which goes down fathoms deep sometimes. And the sower knows that but for the man who flings the grain into the fertile ground this world might as well be a barren rock. And the sower is an imposing figure to all people who care to see the brawny arm of the brawny world hitched to the brawny hand of the brawny world, doing the great world's business.

And then the sower is a poetical figure. He

seems to me the springtime lifted into the figure of a man. He goes out to sow. He is the springtime come to its own. The face is brown with sunny weather, and his lips move to song, his hands move as to the soft wavering of some strange music. He is the figure of spring. God himself painted him. He is going forth to sow. And any man who shall miss the poetry of this figure of the brawny sower going forth to sow is utterly lacking in the item of imaginative understanding. There he is. His face is brown, his beard is crinkled, his hands are warped, his muscles stand out like strongest steel, his stride is strong, and his feet crunch down into the mellow ground. He is going forth to sow. He is singing as he goes. He is feeding the flocks and herds; he is feeding the throngs of children in the crowded streets; he is feeding the throngs of men that crowd the highways of the world. Ah, brawny sower, whither goest thou? And the answer is, "Going out to sow."

And the sower going out to sow represents the earthiness of the world grown into intelligence. This old solid dirt of things springing up into brain and thought and will and ready action and competitive intelligence and working to that end—that is the sower. I remember sowers I have seen. One was a farmer, and his hands were hard and horny and not always clean, his face eager, his eyes as if some gentle star had loosed its light upon his eyeballs. He went out

in the field never scowling, calling to the boy with the harrow, "Come out across the field!" Out he went across the field and he called, "Out across the field." And one time upon a day out across the fields, singing still, marching with the sower's stride and with the sower's talk and with the sower's song and with the sower's service, out he walked into the kingdom of God.

I remember another sower I have seen. He was a preacher man. He had no schooling. He didn't wear fine clothes. They never fitted. He never inquired whether his clothes fit, just so they went on. He was gentle of laughter; his face was blackened with powder when he stormed up across a battlefield; one eyelid blinked, for a nerve was cut in battle. His voice was kindly, with a touch of pain in it. He had a little boy with him, boarding with him. And this preacher man never studied language much. He didn't know the pronunciation of words. He didn't know "orthoepy" from "pronunciation." And this man was teaching the little lad life pronunciation. And this lad lived with him and didn't know (because he was only a lad) how brawny, big, and noble of soul this preacher was. But years have gone and the years have spilled their sunshine upon the face of this preacher, and this boy knows that the man was a sower going forth to sow. He sowed a flower in a boy's life and put some wheat seed in the boy's soil. He didn't prate about religion, but

lived it, very beautifully. And the boy, grown to manhood now, knows this man was one of God's sowers going forth to sow. It is not much odds, this matter of sowing, what one sows, if so be the seed is good. The sower going forth to sow. What odds his name, place, state? The grand vocation is the vocation of the sower going forth to sow.

And do you remember the sower, his name Phillips Brooks? A man clean of purpose, clean and strong of hands, strangely strong. He stood as if he were a cliff the winds blew at and over and by, but could not dislodge or shiver for a solitary moment. And that man for a generation stood sowing. Sowing what? He sowed in Boston, down where the library stands, strange crops of lingering beauty, saying to the earth of thoughtful people only this, that to be good was life's greatest vocation, and that nothing else counted, and that the only persons in the universe were God and man, and that man must fit himself here to dwell with God there, and that God there and man here and man here and God there are all the population. They made municipalities. They made societies. "A sower went forth to sow." What was his business? Answer, "Going forth to sow." I profess that I think the vocation of sower seems to me to be utterly gracious and delightful. I only have to remember this: "A sower went forth to sow," knowing that to-morrow waits for his

sowing, knowing that to-morrow shall bloom flowers of kindness, knowing that to-morrow is to be nurtured by his harvest, knowing that his hands are to feed the hungers of the to-morrows of the world. Any man wants enrichment? Here it is. Any woman wants large service? Here it is. A sower going forth to sow.

One time a man named Lincoln gave his special services, in the providence of God, to take a menace by the throat and choke it dead. And one time in Illinois, when a camp meeting was being held, a man strangely gifted for talking was there and preached, and his name was Peter Akers. And as the man talked his voice was like a bugle blast that got a-going and could not cease, and he said: "In this audience there may be a man who, by the grace of God, shall throttle this evil and choke it to death." And somehow or other Lincoln was there, and felt his blood rise to his cheek and show through the bronze of the prairie tan of him, and he began to dream great dreams. A sower went forth to sow, and cast not drums of battle nor arrow's flight nor javelin's thrust into a life, but cast the seed of a little flower of thought, a white lily, and it bloomed out by and by into a white lily flower called "Emancipation!" This is the business of life, this sower going forth to sow.

And if you think on it, here is the consideration—that there is always a field, and there must be

a sower. It is not much matter about the fields, but the sower and the sowing, and you must have them. And he has gone across the world. The poets have seen him and loved him. He has marched across the hemispheres and the artists have seen him and loved him. And more and more he marches and as he comes and passes and goes on with us or goes on and forgets us, goes on with the calm high light, a solitary figure eternally going, going, eternally going, eternally singing, "I am the Sower of the world."

Now, the singular thing about this narrative, I take it, is that the narrative says, "A sower went forth to sow," and we say, "The sower went forth to sow." And I wonder what right we had to change the article before the noun. "A sower went forth to sow," says Jesus, and we say "The." Who gifted us with the inspiration to say "The" instead of "A"? And if you will read the Bible, you will see that this parable is entitled "The sower." And if you notice the illuminated books, rarely illuminated, you will see that it is "The sower." And the world has enlarged in conception enough to see that God is never "a God," but "the God." And so it is the gift of the prophetic instinct of the human soul that it has not been content in calling God "A sower," but it has been intent on calling God "The sower." The sower went forth to sow. And it is *The Sower*; and where he steps there spring up the flowers and the harvests. And it

is the sower, and where he smiles there the buttercups bloom. And it is the sower, and when he grows weary there the forests flaunt their shadows and their songs. And it is the sower, and where he needs a pillow there the moss banks grow and call, "Lean thy tired head on me." "The sower went forth to sow."

And I would have you to consider this, that the sower is sowing in three places, not one. I will name them. They are common to all. One is the field of the mind, and one is the field of the will, and one is the field of the heart. And God, the Sower, is out sowing in the mind, in the will, and in the love. Joseph Conrad, greatest master of the sea who ever wrote, I think, has told in the vernacular of the ocean the story of the deep better than any poet in poem or prose since him or before him, said the east wind rules the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, and the west wind kings the Atlantic. But here is a King more wondrous than any wind of these wide oceans. The kingdom of God, the soul of man, and the King, the Sower, who goes forth to sow.

Now, God sows the mind to the high thought. Milton has talked—and I think it the most organlike phrase I know—and talked about the "thoughts that wander through eternity." And they are of God. God, the Sower, is sowing the mind down to the high thought. He is out to sow every morning. He will be out to sow to-morrow. He is trying to lift minds high out of the

dirt into the sky. He put his trees along through the spaces here, so that by their swaying shadows we shall look up. He has put his stars overhead so that we must look straight up to get their gentle light and their contagious laughter. God wants to sow the mind to the high thought. There is so much that is beautiful—God is putting that into the mind. And you must know that any noble thought that ever came and perched upon the window of your life, God sent it. Any truth that ever came and asked for lodgment in your soul, God sent it. God never sows any malignity, any unkindness, any discourtesy, any thoughtlessness, but what is sublime, and holy, and uplifting. And I think it is not only a worthy sowing, but a worthy seed; and every life should ask himself, "Have I opened my life to the sowing of the seed of God?" What is biggest, God is sowing that. What is choicest, God is sowing that. What is most gentle, God is sowing that. What is most widely needed, God is sowing that. What will last forever, God is sowing that. What time cannot rot nor hack with the sword, God is sowing that, and for my life, and through my life, I love to think that God, the Sower, is intent upon my mind to make it the blooming place of every blooming flower; to make it the growing place of every growing cedar, every climbing pine, every rooted oak. To make my mind a place for every thought that, eaglelike, sails out across

the heavens. God, the Sower, sowing the mind down to the biggest. And, if we consider it, that is why the gospel is a place to house our thoughts—no trivialities, nothing but eternities, and times, and great souls that dare think they are immortal and dare swear they are immortal. The gospel is done by the hands of God, who reigns forever. And the beatitudes of life and the grandeurs of life—all these are in the Scriptures; and God is still going out to sow the mind, so that it shall be a tropic forest of thoughts, so that it shall be star-domed and beautiful as love. O mind of mine, lay open the little thou hast to the sowing of the Sower!

I read yesterday how the pilot of a river boat died—one hand on the pilot wheel, the other hand, when they found him, lifted up toward the bell rope that ran to the engineer's room. He felt the stab of death, and quick as lightning leaps, his hand reaching toward the bell rope to sound the alarm for the stopping of the ship, and could not reach it, and died with his hand uplifted. On the to-morrow when they found him, and the boat had wandered through the fogs all night finding neither shore nor any impediment, they found him still with a hand frozen and dead on the wheel, and the other hand groping for the rope. O hearts, cannot life get big like that, so that when we feel the tug of death we may still resolve to do what others need, and do for others still? The Sower goes forth to

sow the seed of high resolve to do somewhat for the world, to do somewhat men need; to give oneself to virtue as well as to high resolve. And when men and women get in touch with the Sower who is sowing high resolves, they are undaunted and undauntable. People may die at it, and the task be undone, but still trying, trying yet.

I was at a battlefield, and there was a long escarpment, slippery as soapstone when the rain is on it. It was unclimbable of foot. It leaned a trifle outward. No man by any genius of climbing could climb it. And there were soldiers on the summit, and the leaning pile of rocks and the stab of bayonets were there. And volunteers were called to climb the rocks; and the men stepped out, so many they had to say, "No, enough." And they bound ladders together and leaned them against the rocks, and then climbed and climbed. The high resolve makes the world victorious to know that anybody is so big he doesn't care for death. One sees Death's face, sees the hand that is ready to slay, puts it aside to get the thing that is his own—the high resolve. We are not responsible how high we are going, but why we stop. We are not responsible whether we go up the rock or lie dead at the foot of the rock, but we are responsible for the volunteering to go and trying to get up the rock, or go through the rock.

And the Sower—the Sower—this blessed

Sower, this God Sower, he is sowing his seed in the eternal loves of life. It is wonderful how the heroic stays with us, thank God. Sometimes people say times are not as heroic as they used to be; but people like that are ignorant. They don't know. The present day is not as spectacular as the olden time; but virtue is not spectacular. People who think life was more dignified yesterday are foolish dreamers. People who think men were more heroic a hundred or a thousand years ago are slothful readers of life's book. We may see folks doing the big things now as they used to do. Never were so many at it as now. And yesterday in the papers I read this: A woman in a runaway with a baby leaped from the flying vehicle, was crushed to death; and the baby on her breast is alive and crying for the mother it will never see again. She gave her life that the baby might still rest quiet on the breast of a mother's love. God the Sower is out sowing his seed in this infinite field, the human heart, where love is growing yet and will grow forever; where people love so they think if life is tired and sick, dying has no hurt and being daggered is no pain, and the grave is not a musty house, but a garden perfumed by the honeysuckle's breath. God is out doing that, sowing the seeds of love in the heart.

Sower, what doest thou? "I sow," he says.
Sower, what doest thou? "I sow," he says.

Sower, hast thou no sickle at thy belt? "I sow," he says. Sower, only pulling the flying harrow after thee, hast thou no mechanism for the golden harvest? "I sow," he says. And he is sowing thoughts that make life good. And he is sowing thoughts that make life great. And he is sowing thoughts that make life strong. And he is sowing thoughts that make life white. O Sower, going forth to sow, I see thee and bless thee. He is sowing in the wills of men and women the resolve to be better. Whither goest thou, O Sower? "Going forth to sow," he says. And he will sow in our hearts this holy thought, that every day is a sowing day for God; he omits not one calendar day. And he will sow in our hearts the high resolve that we shall serve the highest and shall be the best. The Sower goes forth still to sow, and in his hand—what ails his hand—it is wine red? Answer—The Sower's heart is breaking on his two hands, and he is going forth to sow. And Love Immortal is going forth to sow the love of God and Christ, and the cross, and the broken heart, the life eternal, ineffable, supreme. O heart of mine, let the Sower have his way.

The Sower is going forth to sow; and see, the morning in the east is white behind him. I see its light grow strangely red and see the sun swing high. O Sower, going forth to sow, come thou my way! O God, O blessed Sower going forth to sow, go through my heart. O God,

Sower with thy heart leaking on thy hand, sow on my heart the flower of hope, the oak tree of strong strength. Sow on my heart the seed that shall give harvests forever and forever and forever more.

XI

JESUS AND THE GRAPES

FOR the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market place, and said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the laborers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first."

"Then began he to speak to the people this parable: A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time. And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the

vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty. . . . And again he sent a second and a third: and they wounded him also, and cast him out. Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him when they see him. But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them?"

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love."

If God has a fairer sight among growing things than a vineyard in fruit, I know not what it is. Much have I wandered in the fields, much have I read of the fields I have not seen, and for conclusive poetry and room for winds to wander and for bees to droon over and for spring and summer and fall suns to kiss, a grapevine abides alone. It is both food and picture.

Wild grapes, tame grapes, no matter which, the bloom of the grape is a fragrance never to be forgotten. I think Jesus will catch their odor on the wind. I tarry, dream here, stand close and take a long breath of ecstasy. If grapes grew only flowers, that would be fruit enough. Grape life is uninterrupted beauty. In winter the stems are a gladness to the eye, like some rare metal trellised there. The grape in bud or leaf flings itself into loveliness. The newly unfolded leaf is a thing of such grace as goldsmiths cannot equal with all their cunning of graver's tool. The shape and color of the new grape leaf make words ashamed. And to the latest day of fall the leaf at the extremity of the vine is as exquisite as the new leaf of spring. So that we have a grape in its ripened maturity and a spring leaf standing out together dainty as any flower. The fall leaf of the grape is so lovely that, seen against the sky or lying on the ground fallen, it exceeds all praises we can give. And the grape clusters hanging under the leaves or out in the open sun with a back-

ground of leaves constitute a picture so satisfying that it fills all the winter chambers of the winter's cold with a luxury of sunlight and fragrance.

A vineyard on a climbing hill where row above row the vintage stands against the sunlight filled with fruitage like a life well spent, where beauty of youth and fruit of age blend, is a scene which once beheld stays on an enduring melody of the heart.

It is September and the grapes are ripe. The bees know it: the sun knows it: the vintagers know it: the Master of the vineyard knows it and is glad. The clusters hang full of fragrance and beauty. The air is redolent: the winds are balm. Picking grapes is not labor but laughter. A whole summer's toil of sun and rain and vine and soil are come to fruitage in the cluster of grapes. I wish I might have been among the pickers that day. And the Owner of the vineyard is there. When saw we a face like his, heard voice like his, or noticed smile like his? All the day long is not too long to pick grapes in his vineyard. To be with the Master suffices to make all the day a song. And they come—the laughing girls, the bounding boys, the women grown, the men with streaks of silver in hair and beard, and the baskets are piled with purple clusters; and near the gateway of the vineyard the baskets crowd together. And still more grapes; and laborers are fewer than the need,

and the late comers and the latest comers are welcome. The vineyard and the clustered grapes, the vintage whereof converse will be held in heaven—we see it all. And the Master of the vineyard is there, the Glory Immortal, and hath vine leaves and grape clusters bound about his brow. No thorns are in this crown. It is a golden day with Jesus among the grapes.

“I am the true vine”—here beginneth a new wonder for the vine. Those who are devotees of Omar Kháyyám and the *Rubáiyát* think themselves the real lovers of the grape. They are not. That hopeless poem of the red wine of the grape, of love that should not be, and the drunkard with wine spilled on his breast in drunken revels, could not be laureate poem of the grape. They are besotted folks who lie in the shadow of the vine, and there is nothing inviting in drunkenness, and in its illicit loves. Disciples of the *Rubáiyát* always soil the page with juice of purple grapes. They think they have pre-empted the vine. They have not. When looked into with observing eyes there is no poetry in that poem which Edward Fitzgerald made familiar and engaging. That vine is the plant of the drunkard, sluggish of brain and heart, and leads to the lampless dark. The poetry falls dead ere the poem dies.

The grape has its laureate spoken by Jesus, “This is my blood of the New Testament, spilled for you and for many for the remission of sins.”

And since that poem was written the grape clusters grow in the midst of the heaven of God and on the pages of the holy book.

They that think they have preempted the vine with drunken and amatory songs have yet to learn the noble poetry of Jesus.

XII

JESUS AND THE NIGHT

“**A**ND she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.”

“We have seen his star in the east, and have come to worship him.”

“Lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy.”

“After supper.”

“He found them sleeping.”

“Cometh Mary Magdalene early when it was yet dark.”

“There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be

born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

.

Hear the voice in the night:

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father,

and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very work's sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it. If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to

pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence."

"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me: and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee.

Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one: as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast

given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."

"Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always."

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they

all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

Hear Tennyson's interpretation of the unlit lamps:

"Late, late, so late! and dark the night, and
chill!

Late, late, so late! But we can enter still.

"Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now."

"No light had we; for that we do repent,
And learning this, the Bridegroom will re-
lent,

"Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now."

"No light! so late! and dark and chill the
night—

O let us in, that we may find the light.

"Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now!"

"Have we not heard the Bridegroom is so sweet?

O let us in, though late, to kiss his feet;

O let us in, O let us in, though late, to kiss his feet.

'No! No! too late! ye cannot enter now.'

"For we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. . . ."

"Until the day dawn and the day star arise in your hearts."

Jesus was born at night. Born in the dark with no candle light. The story reads as if written by angels and should change the night into the morning. Born on a journey and born at night, and the star came out to meet him just as the angels did. And the star traveled across what spaces we know not to find those who cared to find where the young child lay. In the night he agonized in Gethsemane. In the night was he brought by the Sanhedrin for trial because he was God. When he died, the day turned into night so the sun might not see him die. In the night toward morning he arose from the dead.

Jesus loved the night. He frequented its hallowed dark. Often it is said in his memorabilia, "When the even was come," as if he looked forward to the dark. Many a time he invaded the night while others slept. He invaded the night to pray in the dark. At night he walked upon the sea. The night, the sea, and the starlight wrought on him like a dream. He wanted them.

And what a mystery and what a mercy night is! But for the night we should have never known there were any stars. But for the night we should never know the moon could suffuse the world with magic light and make near and far a Midsummer Night's Dream. But for night we should never have had the falling of the dew. But for night we should have been shut out from one of the fairest rooms in God's house.

Had we a nightless world, the glare of light had been insufferable. The night is not an impeachment of the day. It is a resting from the day. We could have slept by day, but sleep would only have been resting. Now, sleep is poetry. Had day stayed all the time, the voices had been tumid, unbearable. Night gives rest, night quiets tumult, hushes care, quiets the heart and keeps it from breaking.

No one can paint the night. It will not sit for its portrait. I recall a picture of Joseph and Mary and the baby Jesus. It is on the exodus to Egypt. The pyramid stands dark against the sky. The sphinx is near beside. And on his

mother's bosom and in his mother's arms the baby lies asleep, and Joseph (whom we greatly wish to meet in heaven) keeping watch above mother and babe. The night seems to fold them in its arms against its heart.

The night calls all things home. The day calls things away from home. Had mankind only daytime it lay not in the ability of him and his genius to have imagined the night. Gloom men might have pictured from seeing shadows cast in the gorges of the mountains. Blackness they might have guessed from being lost in great canyons. But these give no guess what night is. We have to have the night to guess the night: the high and solemn glory of the night sky, the sense of infinitude it gives, the starry splendor, the dank earth smells that come only with the darkness, the exuding of the perfume of the leaves of plants and trees which in the night become penetrative like fear. In the night where was no visible odor by day, there perfumes multiply. The sense of the finger on the lips of day, the hush of garrulosity save of the sweet loquacity of the water brooks, the hushed voices of the birds, the night voices of the cricket's chir, and the spring song of the frogs, and the fall song of the tree toads, and the moonlight voices of the whipporwill, and the mournful voices of the owl, and the ecstatic music of the mocking bird, and the tearful tenderness of the nightingale, and the sense of illimatibility, and the

sure invasion of the soul by the universe and its God—these are of the night.

To miss moonlight would be tragical. Not to have been surprised by the new moon in an unexpected sky hanging like a sickle ready for an angel's reaping hand, not to have seen its nightly advent higher in the sky, not to have been enmantled as by an angel's garment flying in the wind with the full moon's splendor, not to have wandered all the night in dreamy moonlit ways when all things seemed tranced, as if God had hushed them—is to have been dispossessed of a poem perfumed by the sweet violets of heaven. Moonlight is very special poetry of God. No poet can describe it. It haunts the spirit like a snatch of music heard from the sea which was fallen nigh asleep. Moonlight needs no description. It calls for ascriptions of praise to Him "By whom and to whom and for whom are all things." It commands right souls to their knees. Adoration to the sole rationality of man when the moonlight folds its garment about him.

"And the moon was full,"

is the thrilling last word in Tennyson's "The Passing of Arthur." No description, just to say the thing. And the mere and the barge and the dying, wounded Arthur, and the weeping queens all stoled in black and Sir Bedivere forlorn on the shore and the barge answering to no earthly wind moves out silent as a sailing shadow.

"And the moon was full."

And the night with its stars. "He made the stars also" with the fingers which had formed the sun. Skies must not be too solitary. Some torch must be lit at the far casements of the universe. Some gleam must shine athwart the far-spread dark. So God lights the stars. They candle our dark, too. They make us very wistful and expectant. We are caught in some such hid wonder as catches the swallows and makes them circle south like a flock of fall leaves caught in the hands of a great wind. In the presence of the stars we feel star-born. Beckonings infinite invite to journeys which seem not native to earthly feet.

"He calleth the stars by their name." They be the children of God. They are not remote from him. They are a part of his family and cluster about his knees. Aldeberan and Pleiades and Orion and Attarre are under the touch of his hands; and he runs his fingers through the comet's hair, caressing it as if it were a little child.

Can we wonder Jesus loved the stars? A star bears his name forever—the Star of Bethlehem. A star led the Wise Men to his cradle. The night of Epiphany the cloudless night was packed with stars and angels. When walking on the waves of the sea at night stars shine beneath his feet. When he woke from death and unwrapped the graveclothes from his face and stepped from the new sepulcher in which never man lay, the first sight to accost his vision was the morning star.

Nor shall we think strange when in the Revelation he says, "I am the bright and morning star," and when in the blessings given to such as overcome he promised a morning star.

Night is the time for solitude. Day glows too fiercely for reticence and silence. Night is the cathedraled silence where the hushed voices of the spirit may find themselves articulate. All superior spirits need solitude. There must be a room apart, an upper room, for the larger life's dialogue with the heart.

And that is the note struck often in the memorials of Jesus' life. "He was there alone," on a mountain in the gloaming with the sea darkening below him; and it is said and "when it came to even he was there alone." He wanted solitude. He wanted to fold the wings of the long day. "As the day began to wear away," we feel the wishing for the night in those yearning words. And we read, "As he was there praying alone."

The night has solitude like a wider desert than the earth possesses. And a great spirit must have great solitude. Silence is an entrancing musician. Its lute is always in its hand. No wind on mountain height where pine trees cluster in great multitude can compare with the haunting night of solitude. There is solitude in the sea; and Christ haunted the sea. And the fields and the evening invited him. He loved the day, invaded it, sanctified it by his labors of

mercy and of love; but he wanted the night. The dark beckoned to him and he kept the tryst. I hear his footsteps soften as he comes near the dark. I can see his eyes grow tender as he sees the birds fare nestward as the sun is low. The children growing sleepy at sunset puts a smile upon his lips. He wanted to be alone to pray. He wanted to have a hush fall upon his spirit. He loved to meet his Father in heaven alone.

And as the shadows lengthen eastward the laborers afield with brawny arms and happy hearts have left the plows, unyoked the oxen, and are footing it home; and when the children and their sweet mothers stand smiling at the door, then when the even was come, "He sent the multitudes away" and himself found shelter in the dark. Ah, hallowed night, thy Lord finds comfort in thee and shelter and prayer and peace. Night which the Son of God invaded to find solitude for his heart.

And how the love of Jesus for the night comforts our hearts! The gloom may well be dear to us, since it was dear to him. He hallows the night. To a seeing spirit when the cathedral of the night, all lighted up with stars, lifts up its unutterable majesty and beauty and solemnity and glory, all is hushed so we may fairly hear the coming angel company which long ago on Christmas night set laughter to music along the lower levels of the dusk.

To such as invade the night with chaste

spirit and expectant, Jesus may readily appear with his salutation, "It is I, be not afraid." And we know him and have no fear.

The Rapture whose other name is the Lord of everlasting life, when he talked to John the beloved a little while with the lamps of eternity all lit, says he will give to the Prevailers the morning star, may we not hazard that he had the morning star which met his eyes on the resurrection morning, "while it was yet dark," in his remembrance? It saluted him first after his Passion and resurrection from the dead, when he became the "first fruits of them that slept."

"I will give him that overcometh the morning star." O Christ, wilt thou have me my star?

XIII

JESUS AND THE SEA

“**A**ND leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast.”

“And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring.”

“And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him. And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.”

“Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth. But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy. And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master,

master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm."

"And there were also with him other little ships."

"Down a steep place into the sea."

"Jesus . . . passed over again by ship unto the other side."

"Unto the ends of the sea."

"He entered into a ship."

"The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side."

"And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore."

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was full, they drew to shore and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just."

"When Jesus heard of it, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart: and when the people had heard thereof, they followed him on foot out of the cities."

"And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people. And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray. And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land. And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto

them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them. But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out: for they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid. And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered."

"And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship."

"Now, when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: and so was also James, and John, the sons of Zeb-edee, which were partners with Simon.

And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men."

"After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise showed he himself. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore; but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea. And the other disciples came in a little ship, (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not

the net broken. Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise."

The mystery of Jesus fits well into the mystery of the sea. Had the sea not been his background and playground and workground, we should not have missed it because we had known no better. However, once having seen him going to and fro by the sea and to and fro on the sea, we feel the immense appositeness of the collocation, and are grateful to God that it was so. Jesus is so beyond our ability to conceive that whatever helps our thought to him may be set down as a crowning mercy.

"The sea is his, and he made it," is one of the sublimest phrases in universal literature. And manifestly He who made the sea is greater than the sea. And in Jesus, the Greater-Than-the-Sea is here, vocal and visible. We may not say the sea is our chief terrestrial mystery, for we are so shut up in mystery, but we do know that since man was he has felt sea-wonder and has been lured by it, caressed by it, wrecked by it, and, nothing daunted, has still adventured on it as though it had been his dearest belonging. This compulsion of the sea is to be set down as one of our supreme earthly fascinations. I had a father sired by I know not how many generations of

seagoing folk. And because his father was drowned in the Atlantic his mother gave reluctant consent for her son to migrate to America conditioned on his promise to forsake the sea. This promise he made and kept. Nor do I recall hearing him regret his absence from the ocean. He lived his life mid-continent. Through many years when he might have voyaged to his ancestral home he did not and disclosed no disposition so to do. When, however, he was weakening of the sickness whereof he died, he spent the last two winters of his life beside the Pacific Sea. Day by day he would go to the wharf, where anchored the incoming and outgoing ships, and, sailor-wise, exchanged salutations with men never met before as if they had been friends all their lives. And there in the hearing of the sea he died suddenly like Enoch Arden, as if summoned by a sea-call in the night. Unaware for a lifetime of the call of the sea, he heard its summons when himself was ready to "put out to sea" on that wider water than supplied his forbears with a graveyard. His unheard cry was, as that of Enoch Arden, "A sail, a sail," or quiet-voiced and still, his answer was to the sea. We must cross the bar. Tennyson's sea hunger is not indigenous to him alone. In a measure it is on the soul of man. Those moods of longing which are the melancholy of the world and out of which poets weave their most haunting poetry are essential sea-sadnesses.

In William Blackwood & Sons' noble edition of Pollok's *Course of Time*, illustrated by Birket Foster and kindred artists with those lovely wood engravings by Dalziel and others which now are departed, the editor in his biographical note on the dead young poet, simply and dreamily says, "He was buried near the seashore." "Near the seashore." Jesus lived much of his altogether beautiful life which has given to mankind its one perfect poem near the seashore. I have occasionally seen by the shore of the gray sea a church built of stone gray as the sea mist, with its tower as if it were built of sea mist, where hung a bell which swung out when the short winter's day hastened into gray dark, a whole world of laughter and of hope—the laughter and the hope of the gospel of Jesus, which began to be proclaimed by the dear Sea of Galilee.

All lovers of the sea are devoutly grateful that Jesus had the sea for a pulpit, and that he adventured on it barefoot and alone in the dark. Now always since those days and nights the great seas have felt the comfort of him, Lord of the wild waters and all who go down to the sea in ships. The sea is his and "It is I, be not afraid," has been the voice of cheer sounding in the ears of innumerable seafolk what time the waves of death washed wildly over them. The comfort of that unperturbed Christ sleeping or walking on the wicked waves

has entered into the very heart of the sea. Jesus is "sea-born" music.

Longfellow in that sea poem, "My Lost Youth," has caught as few poets have caught the quality of the sea and the mystery of the sea in what may be justly called a very great sea poem:

"And the beauty and mystery of the ships,
And the magic of the sea."

There it is, and thus we all feel the sea,

". . . the beauty and mystery of the ships,
And the magic of the sea."

Thank you, dear dead poet; you knew, and you said, and you may find your rank by this single poem among the deathless poets of the sea.

How beautiful it seems to our hearts to recall how Jesus is identified with all lordliest as well as with all lowliest things! He has taken them into company with his own immortality. If we are to think John, seer of Patmos, was accurate when he said, "There shall be no more sea" (though I deem him lonesome and sea-girt and that he for a moment wished the sea were dead and that there is a sea in eternity), yet because Jesus was a Seaman and a Man of the sea, the sea has become immortal. There through celestial years the sweet and strange story is rehearsed by redeemed immortals following his footsteps in the dust, walking the seashore and

the sea floor. They will whisper silver whispers. "The sea" which shall out-music the cry of those men of the anabasis and katabasis, "Ha thallata" Heaven will hear the sea storm and the sailors' voices whether there be a sea in heaven or no.

Galilee was no great water. The Mediterranean was the Great Sea to that old-time world. Yet was it the Sea of Galilee. It was a sea. It had sailors and fishermen and ships and captains and fishing fleet and rowers and oars and sails and drying the nets and mending the nets and sea smells on the sand and a voice of winds and brawling waters and sea darkness and sea mornings—what more has the widest sea? I profess all the witchery of the sea is on Galilee; and beside it that other greater witchery, Jesus. He haunts it all always as music haunts the waves. He seems part of the sea. His figure against a waste of blue daylight waters or against gray evening waves, or in the starry night, is immortal artistry, and his voice when he speaks out-musics all sea-music.

The sea has bewitched all the poets. It bewitched the Chief Poet. He was so sensitive to all it was as nobody could be, for he attuned its harp. He painted its blue to companion with the blue of the sky. He made it to bear up the ships. He taught the winds to belly the sails. He put barriers to its vaunting waves. He took the dumb fish which people its depths to enforce the truths of the gospel. A fish became the em-

blem of Christ cut on the early Christian cameos because the Greek spelling of fish, *ichthus*, gave the letters of *Christos*. Ulysses has haunted all the poets since those wind sea days of his. Tennyson has presented him in his great sea poem submerged in music and mystery. And it is well to be set to Ulysses' music, but what is Ulysses to Christ? What was his little voyaging compared to the far sailing of Jesus? What is his sea hunger of purpose to sail beyond the sunset, and the baths of all the western seas until he died, when Jesus puts out to sea on a deathless voyage for himself and for us all? Christ is the regal and deathless Ulysses.

Our world is sea born. On our mountain tops are seashells, and on ancient rocks are recorded the lapping of ancient tides, and the recession of waves of the sea. Only a few spots of the earth—Sahara, the Bad Lands of Dakota, and the like—once having eluded the sea, never were submerged in it again. The bulk of the terrestrial globe has had repeated ablutions in the sea. We may well be mindful of our oceanic origin. As the seashell pressed against the ear repeats the moving music of its ocean home, so we of the race of men hear the reverberant waves of deathless oceans. We cannot shake off our sea memories nor our sea allegiancy. Those waves thunder at our feet in dreams and manifold wakings. Some of us repeat the warped music warpedly. They are poets. Others hear and weep, not

knowing what it is they hear nor why it is they weep. We are and stay children of the sea.

And Jesus is our sea-voice and sea-presence. As he haunted the sea and as the sea haunts us so Jesus haunts us, only more—always more.

I will repair me to blue Galilee and slowly pace the shining strand and slowly sail its blue surface touched by the wind to whitecaps, knowing that so I shall cross his tracks somewhere and the sandals of my feet or of my boat shall press his sacred footprints.

I, who am ancestored by sea-folk, am a special lover of the sea. May I be absolved from guilt, so was Jesus before me. Born at Bethlehem, reared at Nazareth, he left them both to come and dwell beside the sea. He answered to the sea call. "Came and dwelt in Capernaum by the sea." He must be near the sea. He could not spend time visiting it. He must be its citizen. Sea smells were not obnoxious to him. Fish smells were to him part of the breath of the sea, as they are to all who love it. The sight of anchors in the sands of the shore made a smile gather on his lips as seeing little children did. A sailboat, lopped on its side like a wounded seagull, made him glad; for he knew the next sea adventure would make the boat laugh like a sea wave and run like one. The broken nets and their owners mending them made him aware of the sea toil in the night and the dangers of the deep, and fish scales on the fishermen's coats

and hands coined for him the deathless phrase, "Come, and I will make you fishers of men," and the solemn yet smiling record has it, "They left all and followed him," but leaves us to fill the sentence out and say, they missed nothing and gained all, for they had him. Fisher folk at home on the waves, at home on the land, children of the dark, weariers for the dawn, drowsy at sunup, seeing they had toiled all night and often caught nothing. But they were adventurers and children of the sea. They knew storms on the waters. They were schooled to hazard. They were playfellows with danger. And from such, older and younger, he took a man with a sea-seamed and bronzed face to make him a rock on the sea of ages. Himself was the Rock of Ages. There stands the rock serene sublime.

All the paraphernalia of the sea is here. No scowling ocean can offer more. The ships and the little ships and the rattle of the oar in the oar locks and the setting of the sails, and the "As they rowed," and "as they sailed." Companions of the dark and the skies, the wakeful sailors, the tired Jesus, "asleep in the hinder part of the ship on a pillow," the sudden squall, the flapping sails, the rising tempest, the clamoring of the waves, the whistling wind, the seamen's calls, the captain's voice, the nearness of death, the call for succor to the sleeping passenger, "Carest thou not that we perish?" the awakened but not startled Jesus, who arose "and rebuked

the wind and the waves and they obeyed him," all these at this hour ages afterward not a tint faded from the scene nor a voice lost in the storm.

Thou Man of the Sea, all hail, we worship thee!

And that night when he departed into a mountain alone to pray after sending the multitude away, and his chosen disciples away, can we ever forget that night? The stars were all lit, the sea was all calm; the sailor disciples rowed across quiet, starlit waters. They sang as they rowed. How can they refrain from singing when rowing on starlit waters? That silvery silence must find a voice. Besides, they had seen God that day grow harvests in the palm of his hand, and had heard God say grace before meat. How, then, could people restrain a song? Not they nor we. And the oars dipped in the waters as accompaniment to the words they sang. Their hearts were light as the heart of a bird. Happy day had set and happy night had dawned on the blessed sea. So they rowed and sang. One said, softly, "The wind is whist." And another said, "The calm is sweet." Another murmured, "How the stars shine on the sea and in the sky!" Happy night after a happy, happy day! So they rowed on by turns. And the stars are in the sky, a heaven above, a heaven below. They spell each other at the oars. In this calm night, on this sweet sea, why hasten? And they rested on their oars and

spoke in low and confidential voices of Jesus and his having fathered the hungry multitude with unexpected bread that hungry day. And his voice saying grace! And their voices saying these things cooed like lovers' voices. And the boat lay still, quite still—not a ripple on the water, not a ripple at the prow. Their boat lay silent and asleep like cattle in the pasture. Only the disciples and the stars were awake. The happy men had seen God do a whole summer's work of growing grain and bread in a moment. They knew now God could hurry when he liked. They had seen him hurrying but not sweaty or wearied with his happy toil. Then they talked in hushed voices of where Jesus went, and why he tarried, and how he should find passage across the sea. The strange Christ must be asleep after his summer harvest, grown in an hour. Asleep in the quiet night under the great stars blazing like lamps—and then there was a silver lapping at the boat's prow, and then a rower said, "I feel a touch of wind on my forehead and in my hair." And still they lay upon the oars in happy rest. In happy calm as they talked in low tones, suddenly a wave bit at the boat's rail and a puff of wind like a sail flapping hit them in the face. They had no sails set. The mast alone like a night shadow stood stripped toil. They had had no wind to fill the sails and they rowed for sheer love of fondling with the oars. Who that loves a rowboat but knows how

their hands itch for the oars, and in the dark when an oar is a thing of feeling and not of sight. Another squall, and another wave riding higher and lapping and lashing over the ship's side into the boat. And then they cease converse and calm and began to row with mighty strokes. The stars are gone from sea and sky. The waves sprawl and the winds rush as though they were terrified and the boat wallowed in sea-trough and wave-top. A gale was on. They played rowing no longer but rowed for life. Their voices were still as the stars had been. They strain at the oars. They were used to the sea's rages and sea sags; none the less they knew there was menace in the tempest. Then, in the thick of the storm, walking as if he had been on a quiet meadow among the sheep, came Christ. He came aboard and the winds hushed and the waves were still. There is a Master of the sea.

At Crisfield and Cambridge, Maryland, one shall find sea poetry worth crossing continents to behold. There lie fisher boats white as foam on a stormy sea, with sails as white as summer clouds. They are oyster boats, beautiful of shape and poise as no yacht can possibly be. Yachts are play boats; these are work boats, perfect in line and loveliness. It is like a summer's holiday to see them. My spirit laughs aloud at the sight of them. They are big with memories of age-long sea adventures. No cloud nor smoke from a steamer's funnel affronts the

spirit. No chut-chut of garrulous gasoline disrupts the quiet of the sea—just the calm of a calm water at night or morning, coming home and going out, and the lifted sail and the wakeful breeze and the bellying sail, and then the white swans make noiseless way toward the sea, where they can hear the wallowing waves off the protecting coasts. These have I watched in the misty morning; these have I watched at the sunset. And in them I have visualized the age-long and age-reviewing industry of my ancestors with never a fleck of dust of all the years on the canvases and the snowy sides of the fisher craft; and beyond my forbears I see in the boats the fishermen of Galilee, and when Captain Peter and his partners had toiled all night and caught nothing, at the command of The Captain answered, "At thy command we will let down the nets." They did and the nets nearly brake with the multitude of the fishes—all this I beheld at Crisfield, Maryland, by the sea, two thousand years away from the fishing of Captain Peter and Captain Christ.

"The magic of the sea," says Longfellow, dreaming of his lost youth. "The magic of the sea," say we, seeing Jesus preaching from a boat for a pulpit. "Be of good cheer, it is I." He is the magic of the widest sea.

And that last morning of Jesus by the sea—its loneliness and loveliness are as lasting as morning and the sea.

“After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise showed he himself. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher’s coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea. And the other disciples came in a little ship, (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken. Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples

durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise."

This is a high tide of poetry. It is Jesus' benediction on the sea forever. I wish myself among them. Nothing is wanting to make the scene perfect. The dim morning light, the indistinct figure on the shore, the sleepy fishermen, the sturdy fishermen, the captain naked, the boat lying idly on the misty waters, and the voice, "Children, have ye any meat?"—that voice! It lifted them like a great wave from the deep places of the sea, and Fisherman John said, like a prayer, "It is the Lord." And Captain Peter, naked as a child, girt his fisherman's coat about him, modest in the presence of the Great Captain of the fleet of all the seas, and sprang into the water and swam to shore.

And they took breakfast with Jesus, and while they ate the sun rose. I wish I had been there.

"The magic of the sea"—its name is Jesus.

XIV

JESUS AND THE MOUNTAINS

“**W**HEN he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.”

“And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray; and when the evening was come he was there alone.”

“And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was as white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here; if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man.”

"And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him."

"And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left."

"Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them."

"Nigh unto the mountains."

We know Jesus was a seaman. The sight of boats and sails and oars was an exhilaration to his spirit. Equally true it is that Jesus was a mountain-man, by which is intended that the mountains lured him. He felt the mountains. They always climbed before the eyes of his spirit.

This is the mark of the mountain-man. Mountains always loom before his spiritual eyes. They are in the landscape of his soul. He is never out of sight of their majestic forms. He does not need to journey to them; they journey to him.

This is not strange. It is natural; for himself is the highest mountain peak ever thrust into the heavens. All besides are foothills when he is near. He made wider things than ocean's brine. Himself was wider than all seas. He made skies wide and high because he himself was wider and higher than any sky. He built mountains up to neighbor with the sky; but he himself is height unspeakable. Mountains are

the perceived aspiration of the world. They haunt the soul because the soul is crammed with aspiration. And Jesus who out-towered all that ever dwelt in our world would by nature turn feet and eyes toward such places as essayed to come to levels where the eagles fly. God invited Moses up into Mount Nebo, so that a mountain soul might have a mountain death; and there God buried him, on Nebo, overlooking surly Jordan, in its incessant haste to the deathbed of Moses, the man of Sinai and the Decalogue and the sense of high courage that for all the years had moved along as majestic as the tide of the sea. No man shall find his grave. God opened it before the resurrection day. He was lonesome without Moses beside him and clothed him with immortality before his time. God understands. "He knoweth that we are dust." So it is written, and he knew not only that we are dust but that as the dust of the world aspires into mountains—so our dust aspires. When our whole story is told we be mountaineers. God made the mountains and we want them: mountain spirit resents dead levels. Men's feet want to climb. The mountains are his. God made them. Man cannot sit and look at the mountain's rugged and vigorous bulk. He wants to climb. No danger scares him. These climbers who lie dead in the gorges of the Alps and the Andes would be an army that should cover the mountain's alluring acclivities that stand

in sunny splendor against the dawn. That the way was foggy with death stayed them not. "I am coming," called the man challenged by the mountain, "coming"—and the mountain eagles dreamed they heard an avalanche crushing into the hollow of the precipice. So it was. A brave man's feet had slipped on the icy stairway and a brave climber whirled headlong to death—but his spirit called exultant as a storm, "I climbed." Death is no calamity. Living with no possibility for climbing the pinnacles of the world is the calamity.

Climbing is the highest exploit possible without wings. It is where curl the clouds and eagles fling their gyrating shadows in sheer ecstasy of flight. Men must climb to neighbor with winged things and dawns and storms.

Since mountains are in our blood, we are confirmed mountaineers. What dreamer can keep his feet from the mountain ascent? I remember when I—a prairie man—first saw a mountain. It was mid afternoon when I landed at its foot. I was total stranger in this locality—but not to the mountain. It glowed on high and pronounced my name. I answered. I climbed the bouldered ways till dark, till the moon arose and the august pines set up an anthem in the dark. I heard the diapason. I clung to the mountain-side like wings to a bird's heart. The way down was pitch dark. Stars did not seem to light that bleak staircase. I was on the mountain ways all

alone, but undismayed as eagles and glad as doves on summer days. I had climbed a mountainside! I had heard the tremendous music of a mountain stream in the dark. I had seen the world beneath me. I had watched the sun in solitary splendor set the heavens to conflagration—and splash the clouds of sunset with splendor. I had feet. My feet had taken the way of winds and clouds and had become as wings. I heard the night stream calling. I heard the night winds crooning. I felt the solitude as if it had been a voice. I was where I belonged. My body had become a part of my spirit. The pines were below me. I had outclimbed them. Should pine trees outclimb a human soul? I stumbled in the dark. Upward—the height was still beyond! I must catch the sunrise there. I did. And then, weary as a tired bird, I knew what the august saying meant, “The Mountain of the Lord.”

Jesus the Mountain-Man.—I love it of him and I love it in him. I love to watch him preach in a mountain a mountaineer sermon whose voice rolls down the accumulated years like accumulated thunders.

Mountains expressed him and mountains impressed him. Mountains, be glad. Ruskin loved ye. That was high encomium. Coleridge loved ye. Shakespeare loved ye. That is encomium sufficient, I ween. And yet ye mind them not. Jesus loved ye, built ye, haunted ye with shadow and streams and nesting eagles and wind and

clouds: and there he came and made ye pulpit and place of prayer and place of transfiguration and place of death and redemption. Mountains, exult! Jesus loved ye.

All mountains are romances written of God. I know so many ranges haunted by eagles' wings and pines and passing and unpassing clouds and thundering waterfalls and pine breath and craggy fastnesses of silence and voices of rivers and watchtowers stars might wish to share.

Lesser mountains, and unimaginable leap of mighty mountain peaks, seeming to be built for eternity—all of that is dear to me. I make obeisance to them all. My mother has her grave on a mountain nine thousand feet in the sky. The stars keep watch above her sleeping dust, and will until Jesus shall put his trumpet to his lips and bid the dead arise.

Had I time—and could—I would visit every mountain range of earth. My spirit demands to see them all—and climb them all. I shall not here. Somewhere I shall. This climbing mood does not preempt my soul for naught. I was meant for the tops of the mountains. I shall somewhere climb all mountains of the Lord.

I am familiar with a mountain range called the Ozarks. They occupy substantial portions of Arkansas and Missouri. They have more streams of crystal water than any mountains I know. They are not high peaks but are variegated and very beautiful. Built of limestone,

they abound in caverns of rare beauty and streams clear as silvern mirrors, wide and deep enough for boats to come and go. This is the region of lost rivers. Through crevices in the limestone a river will disappear utterly. Then, somewhere far off, a river full grown will leap from a fissure in the rocks in the beautiful guise of a spring. These lost rivers play hide-and-go-seek in these enchanting mountains. It seems like a land of dreams. Anyone who will go and wander and saunter for months through this enchanted land will think that he has been out alone with God in a land of his special favor—water everywhere, and water which to drink is to be thirsty for it for the rest of one's days, the rivers are so clear, with limestone channels, with pools of deep delight where trout live. This is a realm of pure delight, where the Ike Walton men come and loiter and creep and cook fish and eat them and renew their youth and laughter. And here are rivulets an artist would find his sleeve pulled by at every turn; and trees of vivid leaf and bud making shadows for the rivers and roads to run beneath. It is a place for such as love to lie on their backs and look at the sky and dream. New England hills and mountains are not more a delight, nor Pennsylvania Alleghanies, lovely as they are. Anywhere a body loiters in this Ozark land he will have heart's delight.

Everywhere is where a body started for. You

cannot miss your way. A whole country will be without a routine crossing, or a railroad. People are not in a hurry, save the motor. It can intrude where you would serenely stand alone in love of the out-of-doors.

One Ozark place I know, Glen Metowee by name, could teach any artist beauty for a lifetime. Three fourths of circumference of the sky is visible from where you stand, and never a spot the eye lights is like any other spot. Summer is a delight, though I will think it loveliest when the leaves fall and perfume the ground and sky, and the trees do not hide the hills, and the landscape displays its wide variety of loveliness. If a body who had journeyed around the belt of the world would stand for a moment in this place, he should bear away the delight of the vision into heaven with him. A river wandering in the distance among the hills and the white pillars of the sycamore stand near and afar. The smoke of many chimneys, blue as the sky, blows on us, showing wood fires were burning there. Cedars and pines lifting green plumes among the lampless trees and a dozen winding roads going leisurely where they would—the world is as if it reached up and out only to the sky, and the scene is so satisfying that if the world stopped where the hills rimmed your road, the world would be large enough.

Another day, a day of early fall, I came to where at a river the railroad halted. There it

turned and retraced its way. Beyond the river lay an Ozark land untouched by railroad for sixty miles. The river was bridged by a ferryboat, nameless and silent. You summoned it for passengers by ringing a bell set in a high and ancient tower. The river was swollen by recent rains. It wandered away wildly, giving no hint as to its destination. Pushed by its swift current, which ordinarily was indolent and indifferent, the ferryboat made unaccustomed headway. If anybody has never crossed a river by a ferry run by a rope and pushed by the current, that body should repent of his ways and mend them. Ferrying is the poetry of crossing. Birds fly across, and man can fly on very noisy wings which subtract all poetry from flight. Noisy crossing annihilates the romance of crossing. Driving through an old-time wood tunnel-bridge with the wheels and horses' hoofs playing a tune of the journey on the shadow bridge roadway, has something of music in it like the rhythm of horses' feet heard afar. Now, tunneled wood-bridges are few; and the current-pushed ferry is our remaining poetry. I would knowingly make a long journey for such a crossing; but this arrival was a surprise. I did not know to what crossing I was coming. The river muttered to its muddy banks, "I am in a hurry and in no mood to push the boat for these newcomers." Nevertheless, having complained first, it did the job cheerfully and pushed us over. The bell was

pulled by myself hilariously. It jingled out lugubriously, "A man wants across"; and the ferryman came. He had his baby with him. That helped the crossing amazingly. Babies help everything. I stood looking at the frothing river that pushed us across to be rid of us, and the Ozark stream took a long course before it disappeared around the knees of the mountains, going with intent toward the sea, in weary distances. And, the river crossed, we regretted the passage was so speedy. We climbed a long slant up the mountain and came to a road which for twenty-five miles never left the winding ridgetop. Sometimes the river lay below us in plain sight making long curves, so that it might linger longer among the mountains of its love; sometimes it eluded us as if tiring of our company, only to show its sinuous course again afar off, at last disappearing like a flock of wild birds in a wood. On the ridgetop the road stayed and wandered like a vagabond stream, and looked across the miles of billowy hills clad in autumn greens and golds and browns, through which the hill winds blew. I was in glad mind. I was to dedicate a house of God situated on the banks of a crystal river where the bright water rippled over the pebbles, making music very sweet, or stood in pools where sycamore roots were spread out to detain it; and the sycamore trunk stands white as the pillar of a Greek temple, sending up a trunk beautiful with sycamore leaf. Thither

we tend. And the church was on the edge of the river, so that the pulpit was nearest to the stream, and with the windows opened, the voice of the running waters, sad as tears, was audible between the singing of the hymns; and the church bell on Saturday evening called to all the valley that a house of God was there, and such as cared for God might meet him if they came. Thither we tended when the sky was sweet and sad, and the hill winds wandered coyly in and out among the trees; so we ventured on with singing hearts and eyes that danced for joy of the day and the morrow, and the church to be consecrated to the Lord of hosts. And we were as if in the glad land of dreams. We stopped for dinner, nothing loath, beside the stream, which would not by any inducement of our hospitality be persuaded to linger. We slaked our thirst at the stream, nor lingered long. We must on to other mountains, for they beckoned, so on we went. There was a place named Hahatonka, the friends said, was too fair for my eyes to miss. I did not desire them to. When did I desire to miss seeing God's out-of-doors? So on we went, leaving the ridge road and ran along the stream and up the lifting hills, as if the hills were the waves of a great sea at storm, going along unexpectedly nor querying what the road would do, nor caring. For are we not on the road and anywhere bound? This is as joyful as Christmas. And then we came to Hahatonka.

We did well to come. The way had been laughter and the arrival was delight. Here we stopped where a cliff of limestone built a wall unscalable for hundreds of feet. A lost river found itself and poured into the river in a single spring, cold to the lips and sweet to the spirit. A mill, built of oak boards, gray covered with a patination of green, beautiful as Greek coins, is built here. A mill wheel kept singing to itself slumber songs as the rush of waters poured over it. A waterfall frothed and sang and cut up didoes innumerable with a voice that brought long-departed yesterdays. A little distance from where we camped by the gray-green mill and the singing waterfall and the water wheel, was a natural bridge enticing to see, the more so that it was not set down in any book. Evidently, a cave had fallen in, but the stone of the natural bridge had strong enough arch to hold the bridge up, while on either side the ground had fallen into the cave. So had God bridged the chasm. Under the natural bridge we walked and over it we ran; and the day was beautiful nearing evening. The sun was not set but had passed behind our palisades of the limestone wall. Between it and the waterfall of the lost river day came to night. The river widened like a lake where water cress grew in great patches of vivid green, and the lake-river threw back the skies with their wine-glow which flooded the waters with glory. We wanted to tarry there as Peter

on the Mount of Transfiguration. We kindled our fire, cooked our supper, drank from the new river, having said our grace with glad hearts while the fire crackled and sputtered and sent up its incense very precious. The day set and the night came on with its stars and its precious night odors. And the steady murmur of the waterfall was heard. The mill wheel was resting from its labors, the mountains gathering around us like stately guardsmen of the dark. What mountains are these? Nay, the right question is, Whose mountains are these? They are the Lord's mountains. He made them. He loves them. He rested his heart when it was tired and troubled by climbing to their crests and making their solitudes places of prayer and praise and yearning. God be thanked for the consecration Jesus gave the mountains:

Mount Zion where the Temple stood: Jesus sitting in sight of historied Mounts Ebal and Gerizim: Jesus at the Mount of Prayer: Jesus at the Mount of the Sermon: Jesus at Mount Hermon and its summit of snow, where his garments glistened as no fuller could whiten them: Jesus on Mount Calvary, higher in spirit than all earthly mountains are, died upon the cross for us: Jesus on Mount Calvary for burial and resurrection: Jesus in Galilee on some unnamed mountain, whose name we shall know in heaven: Jesus on the Mount of Olives to start on a longer journey than any far-going stars have

ever made. Surely, Jesus hath hallowed all mountains forever.

Nor have my feet ever climbed mountains where I did not find the Lord of the mountains before me, and did not see his footprints on the mountainside.

Lord of the mountains, hallowed be thy name.

XV

JESUS AND THE TREES

“**E**VEN so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”

“Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit.”

“Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.”

“But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.”

“And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way.”

“And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; when they now

shoot forth ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand."

"For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"

"He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?"

"And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry: and seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find anything thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever. And his disciples heard it. And in the morning as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God."

"But only God can make a tree" is the true and wise saying of a dear dead poet who because of his lovely poem on "A Tree" will live as long as trees burgeon and leaf and give shadow and music in the wind. As long as a tree stands shadowy against the blue of summer sky that

long will lovers of the woods hold in fond remembrance the poet lad who outsang all the poets of all the Junes in lyric love of trees whose shaded forests and great arms making darkness lift never-ending ascriptions of praise to God, who planted them. Joyce Kilmer may wear a crown of oak leaves unwithering about his brows till the last springtime, when the last leaves are pushed off by the budding of the leaves that are to be. He loved the trees and knew, as Jefferies did not and Burroughs did not and Thoreau did not, to whose artistic and creative skill to attribute them. God makes the trees. He knew who was the Great Gardener.

Turner so loved his pictures that when he had sold them he was feverish to buy them back and spent vast sums (stingy as he was accounted by his contemporaries to be) to recover them, which is another way of saying the artist loves the thing his skill has created. Nor is this self-appreciation. It is simply lovely love of the beautiful. And we do not guess that when Jesus, who planted all the trees and invented them and created them and was at home among them, loved his own artistry. "God hath made everything beautiful in its season" is a golden saying of the long-ago seer and is worth pondering on all through the day till the stars are lit. Given the luminary, the shining is a necessity. It is so with God. He is Beauty and must emit beauty as sacred herbs emit balsam. Birds sing to get

rid of their own music. God is ever in quest of opportunity to get rid of his own beauty.

And so God made a tree and loved it. The Gethsemane olive tree shadowed him and heard the drip of his blood when the bitter anguish brought blood-sweat to his brow. And on a tree he died. The olive trees' leaves were gray in the desperate helplessness of their despair at his infinite anguish. And the tree of the cross bears forever the crimson of his precious blood as the sacrament of his death. Trees have their chrism and their coronation, therefore, at the hands and heart of God.

"Only God can make a tree." And what tree did God make? Why, witling, any tree. The mystery is not some tree, some stately Sequoia growing when Harpist David was barefoot harper on the Bethlehem hills, and to-day lifting up its magnificent bole and spreading branch and shadow, but any tree. The mustard seed, which forgot it was so tiny and lifted itself from an herb into a tree until it fooled the birds so that they builded their nests in it (be sure Jesus had seen a bird's nest in a mustard plant; for his eyes were ever open to see and never forgot what they saw), certain it was a tree; the hyssop growing on a wall; the sagebush perfuming the desert winds; the spurt of stunted cedar that grips the naked rock like a drowning man a spar and leans over the mountain abyss like a rooted shadow endeavoring to take flight as it had seen the eagles

do, torn by thunders and storms—snarled, misshapen, indigent in branches and shadow—a thing for stately cedars to scoff at or ignore—God notes them and loves them and perpetuates them and blesses them with odors very precious. And poor, broken trees the ice storm overcame, and the bent tree in the path of a tempest of wind or sleet in the early spring when the saps were beginning to run; knotted disfigurements like the Yellowstone pines; angry trees like the wild locust, with its ten thousand thorns; trees bitten at by the dogs of the desert heats and winds; or cottonwoods on the wide wind-swept plains where, with all their valor, they are not able to grow higher than the banks of the ravine in which they struggle and in whose gully they root—such trees, all trees have God as their artist. He loves them and wants them and keeps them for his own delight; and from springtime to springtime through all the centuries he renews their youth and gives them offspring, so that no days of the world shall be unshadowed by forests nor unsung to by their wind-swayed branches.

A tree is a perpetual miracle. The acorn remembers what tree it is to father and never fails. The maple's winged seed (uncounted multitude) misses with never one of its mighty multitude of seed if they come to root and growth to bring a maple leaf and bark and personality. It is enough to drown a man in a sea of baffling won-

der to consider. All the varieties of trees there are and the variety of wood of every kind and the hid beauty under the rind and every tree to have its own perfume like a flower! End is there none to this yearly miracle of the growing tree. Spring unto spring this miracle is renewed. The lonesome pine, the persistent elm, the fretful aspen, the hemlock with its arms out to hold the falling snows or falling leaves, the wild exuberance of tints when autumn comes, the shimmering green when spring comes to earth once more with its resurrection and its music—who but God could have been so lavish in his skill and unforgetful of beauty everywhere?

I have been looking for my lifetime out of doors to see a homely tree. I am waiting yet, though now I do not look for so bizarre a thing. If I see with God's eyes, I shall perceive the beauty in things he sees. He has no unlovely tree. Some of them scowl like winter in its frenzy; some of them smile like a baby looking at its mother; some of them are gigantic as a cathedral standing against a night sky; some of them are willowy as the wash of a summer sea; some of them immobile like a frozen thing, but all of them are a summons to admiration and meditation.

Tree roots dig down among the foundations of the world, never desiring to see the light, always eagering for the dark, seeing their sunlight through the proxy of leaves and hear-

ing the winds crooning like a far-off sea through the branches and leaves that cannot endure the dark, and therein reenacting the utter wonders of all roots, which in their endless shadow lead sunny lives. What a sturdy lesson is here in playing one's own part, not whiningly nor repiningly, but singingly like a brook on the road from and through shadows to sunlight and the open meadows, where the sun is all. Hidden are the roots yet revealed, never seeing the day yet are fed by the daylight. Without roots no tree trunk and branch and leaf and blossom, yet none the less without trunk and branch and leaf no root. The sunlight which the branch and leaf drink in makes the tree which is in bulk almost all sunlight. Roots and leaves are happy partners in the shading of the world and growing the fruit which makes man glad. I have often pondered when lying in deep shadows made by hoary trees, with a touch of sadness in my pondering, remembering that the roots never see the sun or the sky nor feel the drip of dew, nor behold the high advent of the day, nor supply nest for singing birds. The sun seems so to be desired that out of sight of it life seems not life. "The proud tops of the eastern pines," whereof Lord Shakespeare talks in voice of everlasting morning, were not but for the roots.

And roots know not the branches nor branches roots, yet are they yokefellows in a subtle poetry without which the earth would be a desert land.

How strangely are things yoked and with what wealth of detail and tracery like a winter's frosted pane, howbeit all unwittingly as the frosted pane! It is a world passing fair and passing mysterious and interknit. How beautiful roots are! The roots of trees when traced are so eager and urgent and not-to-be-stayed, going they know not where nor on what errand, but God hath sent them. They be his servants doing his will and glad in his pleasure. Sometimes ebulliently vital roots lift them above the soil. I have seen great bulging roots of hard maple and beech cover rods of ground knotted like the rind of trees, but the value of them being not as a tree's bole but in the rooting underneath. They fairly roofed the ground. They preempted the ground under the huge tree as if they were pavement. But they looked not at the sky but always turned their face downward like a bashful look. We need not feel compassion for the roots of things. They love their place. Uprooted, roots die. They have their place in the eternal artistry of things and do not rebel against their fate but revel in it. And when they begin to rush saps upward along the long and steep incline of the high trunk, they clap their hands and are busy as swallows in the sky. Tree roots lead no grumpy life. They want no lattice to see the stars. They want to wander in the cloister shadows as in perpetual prayer. Which were better to be, root or leaf? were idle

controversy. There is no controversy in life. There is only fellowship. To work where it is appointed is poetry and service.

I know a place on the beautiful Ohio that is owned by two people so dear that heaven will not be homelike if they should neglect to go there. From this spot may be seen the stately water for miles above and below as it wends its unfretted way, as neither eager to come or go, but always hearing a hidden voice bidding it onward. There these lovers of out-of-doors and trees and violets and plum blossoms and autumn tints watch for each varying mood of the year, and see the sweet whimsicality of God, who will not let anything or any year be a simple reduplication, but sees to it that the eternal poetries weave some new tapestries wherewith to astonish the heart.

On that long hillside there is an ancient oak huge of girth, stately of figure, silent with vast reticence, sleepless, vigilant as the stars, unforgetful of its ancestry, bearing on its face its sublime strength, careless of the years, obdurate to bear the tiger lunges of the winter's winds, schooled to endure not morosely but triumphantly, and this stays there so profoundly, not to say defiantly, careless of men as the sphinx with the desert waste behind it, careless also of the passing river; river and mankind are alike to its magnificent repose. There it stands on a rocky promontory overlooking a gorge. How its

roots ever made rootage on that rocky, uninviting point nobody can tell save He who made roots to anchor the leviathans of the forest and buttress them against any winds that blow and stood them up to affront the centuries which take such apparent delight in smiting things with the arrow of death. As I saw this oak tree the master of that hill was my guide, a man over eighty in years and under twenty in heart. He walked nimbly and with ill-concealed triumph to show the unanticipated giant. What a glint was in his eyes when we came on that lord of the forest! What a happy twinkle was in his dear eyes as he looked at the tree and then at me to bask in my admiration! The man was oak also, magnificent and lasting; and though the brave tree knew it not, more lasting than that trunk rooted on the acclivous rocks. The man had met battles too. He had ridden neck to neck with Death and laughed in Death's face. He was unaffrightable as this pleached majesty and sunny as a meadow in a spring morning. I watched those two oaks and knew that some day the forest oak should succumb to death and wither as if a fire had caught in its leaf and branch; but my friend, the man of battle and the man of the pure heart and the steady, seeing brain, should escape death not by flight but by the triumphant method Jesus came to proclaim and disclose. There are statelier oaks than those the forests have to show. There are set dates of death for all

the forest boles, however many centuries old, but no dates of death for these mighty growths called the children of God. So, there we stood and smiled and thanked the Great Forester for the tree he had planted and tended with unwearying care while the spring sunlight shined on the wandering river and the far-away hills and the near-by valley and on the sweet face of the Master of the Oak. It was bitter hard to leave the oak, though it needed not our presence or tendance or company. Before we were, it had stationed itself sentinel of that windy hill: after we should have gone to stay with God it should sentinel the hill with watch and music of rustling leaf and tossing top a-frolic with the winds which adventure down this long, winding valley. But we had other friends of the woods to visit, and the day should soon be spent like burning flax. There was yet an avenue of aged cedars on the left and aged catalpas on the right to traverse. And they were very fair to see. And the master of the Hill brought me to a grove of superstately beeches with their arms dipped down as mothers reaching down for little children and with great trunks scrolled over by some cunning lapidist who had all time in which to work his artistry. And nobody was here to tell when the grove was planted. The fresh wind which blew over apple trees at bloom came among the beech trees and lingered lovingly and trustfully as we ourselves were eagering to do. But winds have more

leisure than men who must work for a livelihood. We begrudged the winds their command of leisure and caught at their hands in greeting and farewell, knowing right well we should not meet them anywhere again any time. Winds come and go, but the same wind only goes wistfully past once—only once. We fain would recall them and they fain would be recalled like a sweet singer; but they are bidden to kiss the cheek of water or flower or child but once and then carry that kiss on their lips for always. The sunlight filtered through the young beech leaves a veritable smile of greenery—so many leaves, such thick foliage that not a ray of sunlight could penetrate that bosage. Beech trees are singularly compact in their spread of leaves—scarcely a tree of the forest so much so. And in spring's young green and in summer's maturer emerald and in the fall's exquisite sunlit leafage, there is no room for choice, only room for delight and manifold wonder and gratitude. These trees were not trunks seemingly hewn out with the swift and careless hand of a tempest, where the trunks are knotted and bulging and snarled, as if not only a hasting hand had been their sculptor but also an angry hand and one not quite skilled. These trunks had been sculptured slowly and with infinite care like the mediæval cathedrals. Nothing was done in haste or absent-mindedness but with wealth of leisure and love like the face of the Christ done in some

transept by an artist who made his chisel a voice of prayer. What a tented place to tabernacle in! What a green roof to lie under and rest the soul! What a slumber-room to let the straying winds stray through from sunrise to evening star and then onward through the balmy night! We could not stay. The audience in a city not far removed beckoned. There may be time when we shall have space for waiting as long as we wish where we wish. Eternity makes space for that, blessed room. So the master and I turned reluctant steps from the beech greenery and odor and damp-ground smell and sly passing breeze which would not tell its destination, down through the avenue of cedars and catalpas, over a rustic bridge which spanned a glen crammed with rocks which the years had thrown in anger and where the rains are in their spring or fall plenitude, the waters rush and call like a mountain-swollen stream. Then our footsteps turn up to ye olden house which has been signaled by seventy-five years of passing river steamers and which was in its youth a station in the underground railway where many a black man and black woman who had periled their way across the Ohio, slept an untroubled night of rest on their weary way toward freedom, and where cultured men and women had been pioneers in education and freedom. There we found the mistress of the hill, to whom the beeches and the oak and the spring violets, purple and pure

white, and the fountain-rise of blooming pear trees was dear as the spurt of an old Italian fountain on the Arno, and who loved the fall time and the withering and coloring of the leaf and watched the birds circle south and on whose porch the phœbe builds, and on whose barns the pigeons courted and took their swift and un-wayward flight, and she within the house or out of it loving all lovely things which man made or God made with a wealth of knowledge in things artistic made without and within a place of refined enjoyment, and above all kept house so that if the Chief Artist had walked down that wandering valley, he should have felt the walk not perfect without spending the night in that house. And the day was beautiful in sky and leaf and balmy wind and the river never intermitted its flow nor the trees their growth and loveliness. But I, the wanderer, must away. River and trees and sweet and refined home I might not see again but the master of the hill and the mistress of the hill I shall dwell with forever in heaven.

There is a company of ancient willows in a ravine watered with many springs near Saratoga which is beyond any willow wonder I have known. The willow is not specially a long-lived tree. And when they do grow and stay they are worthy of veneration and commemoration. None such as these have my eyes saluted. They lean and climb and do all things which willows

should do and should not do. They violate the laws of growth and the proprieties of willowing, but to the immense delight of such as view trees with happy hearts and singing voices these bearded willows. They are Methuselah trees. Thick-bearded antiquities and yet all willow and no make-believe. I could stay with them a year and each day a delight. 'Twould be well worth a pilgrimage across a continent or a sea to set eyes on them. They rim the stream, they run up the babbling water, they run down the hurrying stream, they climb the banks, they descend to the water levels, they make solemn way down into the shadowed woods and bright way to the rim of the hill. But they will not go farther. They will not go out of hearing of the brook. They are like children who must stay in sound of their mother's voice. What wayward fancy grew them so only the wise God can tell! But as they are they stand a poem of the willows whose first flush of spring green kindles dreaming, and whose last slight yellow tint tells how wistful they are to stay and yet how certain they are to go; and through the winter, which is long in that ravine, they stand sublime memorials of the years and wounded soldiers of stormy yesterdays but monuments to the wisdom which fashioned a willow to bend before the summer wind and grow stooped from the gale, but to remain a visible blowing of the winds of heaven.

Through cedars three hundred fifty feet

high I rode to Mount Tacoma by the sea. Through slow-surfing groves of gray swamp-cypress trees festooned with gray mosses have I rowed on southern lakes and bayous. Through sonorous wildernesses of pines have I walked the livelong day, sung to by ocean voices which the long breath in the pine tops made. Through miles on miles of white birches have I made my way in the Adirondack wilderness, and along sunny rivers where they stood shyly, maidenlike as retreating into the shadow. Through tamarack swamps have I floundered. In woods of hemlock and hard maple and shining hickory and centuried oaks have I loitered in golden autumn splendor. Through long forest avenues of stately elms have I peered. Along the Wabash I have spent a day in the marble columns of classic Greece sating my eyes on the marvelous sycamore pilasters. I have waded knee-deep in the old gold of the tulip leaves when the fall winds bade them fall.

And then, to know of all the forests and all the trees that the Great Forester whose other name is God has planted in all the valleys and on all the plains and hilltops and mountainsides of this fair earth, innumerable in variety and use and beauty and leaf and texture of wood and perfume; and then should anybody wonder if Jesus loved the woods? Who save an amazing lover of the woods should contrive this labyrinth forest of the earth?

It was fall. The clouds were swift-winged. The air was smelling of rain and sweet with the musk of newly fallen leaves. The blackbirds were maneuvering in black clouds, fitting their wings for the long migration. The whirling winds took armsful of leaves and flung them high in the air and watched them whirl aloft and then eddy down. The wind is a poet.

A good friend took me and we went whither fancy led. We did not have to go. We wanted to go. Where shall we go? Anywhere, and when we find it we will stop and cook our dinner and smell the fallen leaves. So we went. He drove. I watched; and on we sauntered in the sweet fall wind-breath and the clouds flying low as if they meant to kiss the treetops, and sometimes a few raindrops flinging themselves in our face for fun. Then I caught his arm and called like the voice of a strong wind: "Here's the place. This is Anywhere." And we stopped—blessed stop to my memory for all coming years. It was in a crook in the arm of the Wabash. It was a place of reticence. It had to be looked for by an eye trained by years of watching for unexpected loveliness. What a place of music of crooning autumnal tunes it was, and what huddles of leaves packed with perfumes, and how deep they were, and what trunks of hard maples and beeches and sycamores and elms and oaks we found in a fraternity of majesty! I never have spied so many great trunks of such varieties

of trees as that little glade held. It was the Island Valley of Avilion whereof the poets tell, but the location of which they never recite. Better so. We, my friend and I, found it. Finding is better than being told. The winds trumpeted, the leaves rained down in fitful torrents, the bed of a stream, almost dry but with pools of clear water, was crammed with the leaves which eddied and smiled and played hide-and-go-seek with each other and the wind and us. And we two preacher men who loved God's out-of-doors and his woods and silent places called "Amen and amen." We cooked our steak on sticks, kindling the fire with withered leaves which sent up their incense as a sacrifice, and we sprawled while we ate in the knee-deep leaves and watched the vagabondage of the clouds and the leaves and the mad toss of the branches high overhead and the sturdy and magnificent upleap of the stately trunks; and we ensconced in the vast quiet of tree-born music, where our souls were tranquil as a quiet sky at evening; and to the tuneful voices we went to sleep and dreamed the angels had come to the riverside and were making melody. We slept not long—just a wink of sleep and then up and about wading in the music and artistry of the leaves and hearing them make music to our tread. Rustle, rustle, rustle, and still on we waded in this surf of fallen leaves. "The trees of our Lord are full of sap" and full of leaves and full of music;

and the fallen leaves are the memories of all the summer suns and starlights and drift of rain and push of winds and inhalation of the summer's breath that had added thereto the music of their own—the rustle of fallen leaves. We went our way and took all the Island Valley of Avilion away with us. We need go there no more forever. All it had we have, and what it did not know we knew—that the woodland was the Lord's. And we worshiped Him.

Poet Lanier sobs:

Into the woods my Master went,
Clean forspent, forspent.
Into the woods my Master came,
Forspent with love and shame.
But the olives they were not blind to him,
The little gray leaves were kind to him;
The thorn tree had a mind to him
When into the woods he came.

Out of the woods my Master went,
And he was well content;
Out of the woods my Master came,
Content with death and shame.
When Death and Shame would woo him last,
From under the trees they drew him last;
'Twas on a tree they slew him—last
When out of the woods he came."

Under the trees he nigh broke his heart: on a tree he did break his heart; for of heartbreak he died: on his brow they hooked a crown of thorns, not knowing in their blindness that so did the

woodland give deathless coronation to the King immortal, invisible—till now; and among the trees of a hillside was he buried; and with tree branches beneath his feet and waving over his head was he given ovation on one sunlit day, when the multitude for a moment's space had eyes to see the King of the Ages come to town.

The trees he made received him in the time of his fight with sin and death; and we shall not find it strange that in the Land of Salvation, where no night is nor cloud nor stormy wind, are trees of life. God will have his shadow and his green leaves and the winds smiling through the shadows forever. He who made the trees of the earth so fair and strong and shadow-giving will not have a treeless heaven nor forget to plant them in the Land of Pure Delight. "Their leaf also shall not wither." The Forest of Arden waves green and lovely to our dreams, but the Forests of Heaven shall stand sentinel-ing the Smiling Hills and wafting fragrant breath unwithering forever.

Not there the tree of death on which Jesus died, but there the tree of life, whose fruit and shadow are part of the infinite mercy of eternity.

XVI

JESUS AND THE GRASS AND WILD FLOWERS

“**W**HEREFORE, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?”

“Made them to sit by companies on the green grass.”

“A reed shaken by the wind.”

“And why take ye thought of raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”

Read God's own story of the making of the world as it is set down in geology and it would almost appear that grass was an afterthought with God. At least it was late when grass appeared. That antique world of the monster creatures of the monstrous form knew nothing of grass unless we classify the reeds and rhododendrons as grass. Reeds might to the eyes pass for grass, their green is so vivid, their toss in the wind is so rhythmical and hilarious when the winds are romping at play under the summer

skies. But all green things are not for grass; for the grazing beasts, horses, sheep, and oxen, graze. The fields of grass are their daily bread. None of them feed on leaves. Reeds are a part of the persistent loveliness of the earth. The winding meadow rivers, where the reeds and rushes root in the stream and hobnob with the winds of day and night, would lose appreciably and measurelessly if deprived of this waving, graceful green. The sea-marshes which wade out knee-deep in the sea and stand guard along all shores of tidal rivers winding inland from the sea, are green in the summer, and such a passion of brown in late fall and all winter as that we should have heartache were they to forget us, or wash away with some stormy winter wave. Wild ducks and geese and bobolinks going south break their fast on the seeds. Seeds may pasture the birds of the sky: they do not furnish food for grazing things.

Grass is a humble thing to which the beatitude might apply, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Grass is such a humble thing—so lowly, so contrite in heart, so little careful for itself, and so universal. It means to cover the world. It wants to garment the nakedness of things. Mosses and lichens are a species of shadow the grass casts. "Where art thou going, green grass of the field?" "Everywhere," replies the grass. It occupies the prairies. It tufts the golden sand dunes. It asserts its right

to the desert, where it sturdily attempts to anchor the shifting sands by filaments of roots. Hundreds of miles of Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, Colorado do the grasses root not as continuously, but so much as separate households among the olive-green-gray sage. How the cattle herds and the sheep flocks feed on the sweet-breathed grass as the guests of God! "Have dominion" must have come to the ears of the grass of the field; for it wants to be friend to the whole world. Poets write little of it. They lavish their poetry on the wild flowers. It is not in my heart to fault them. All the praises they lavish are well bestowed. They cannot overpraise wild flowers, nor can they sufficiently praise those beatitudes of God. Meantime the green grass smiles out humbly but gladly to God. No voice poet has ever lifted on them, or that ever will be lifted, can be equal to the praise of the poem of Jesus—"If God so clothed the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow." Anything the other poets may ever say will be trite after The Poet said his say about the grass.

The temporary growth which hot winds devour or the flames consume, or the browsing beasts pasture on, God has dowered with a wealth of beauty that clutches at the throat like a beloved voice long unheard, but heard again. God does not omit loveliness from a thing because it is humble, and unassuming and useful. God does

not seem to set store on length of life as men do. We decorate things which endure like pyramids and cathedrals. God decorates butterflies whose life is as a vapor and grass whose length of life is as the blowing of the hurrying wind. It is beautiful in God. So it happens that grass is chief among mural decorations of our home we call the world. How æsthetic grass is, seen in little patches like a cottage garden or in wide prairies reaching from sky to sky, or in the mountain-meadow rimmed with snows that never melt, or in pampas grasses waving like plumes that are unspeakably triumphant, grass affable to winter's frost and cold and standing tiptoe to run toward the spring wind's call, peering out from its half-closed lattice of winter for the first prophecy of spring, it asks no alms. It expects no sowers' plowing or planting. It relies solely on the friendship of God. And, content with that care, pastures bleating flocks and gentle herds from age to age, and holds the soil secure against the washing of the rains, and holds the landscape in its rounded contour as if it had been hewn from the granite of the hills. And the miracle of hospitality was wrought at the hands of Jesus when he had seated his guests on the green grass. That was his table and that his divan. Blue Galilee before him and the tender, hospitable grass beneath them, the cerulean sky domed above them as Jesus, maker of grass and sea and sky and human hearts, sanctifies the

scene and works a work of love and hospitality because he was a Giver of bread. The miracle of that day passed: and the miracle of the grass lives with us this day and all days.

When spring sends forth its first green of the grass in sheltered places facing south or in marsh lands or along the streams, who can utter the thrill of it fittingly? Or when the blue grass grows its full height and bearing seed answers to every wind like a green sea-wave, or alfalfa flashes out in rapturous green its flame of heavenly blue, or when prairie slough grass—blue stem—rocks to and fro in prairie winds, is the poetry of the grass complete. Or when the stretch of prairie grass, with never a shrub in sight, unless a sumac, where wild strawberries grow, is lit with June flowers and all a-toss with a joy of winds that never weary, or red clover smiles out with a loveliness which surprises God; or in summer and fall, when the grass cut with a scythe, gives out fragrance that fills the night and scents the day, then only can we begin to recite the heavenly history of the “grass” “which to-day is and to-morrow—!” Great Poet, thou hast written a deathless poem of the grass; and the winds have set it to music.

A reed “shaken by the wind” is a Jordan memory. What time Jesus set foot in that surly stream he saw the reeds shaking and felt the winds that came and went restlessly in that deep river channel. And John, “What went ye out for

to see when ye visited John at the Jordan, a reed shaken by the wind?" Nay, a mountain no wind could phase—a mountain bleak, hot, volcanic, yet a mountain of the Lord. The reeds shaken by the wind are at his feet. Their voices whispered about his breast and near his heart; and where thunders the tempest and where lightnings hiss and burn, John stands tremendous, solitary, and near to God.

No doubt Christian hearts of all the Easter days have set apart the lily as the flower of resurrection because Jesus lifted the praise of that flower and flung it to the winds like precious spikenard. In truth, the flower Jesus sang the praise of was not a lily, not a cultivated flower, but a flower of the field, a wild flower, the anemone, the Oriental windflower. He made the praise of a common wayside wild flower immortal. Nobody can permanently forget, neglect or ignore wildflowers seeing above all men have dreamed or done since Jesus has praised the common wild windflower. He tossed the wildflowers in our faces with the blowing wind of spring. God knows they are lovely whether we do or not. The beauty is there whether we see it there or not. Settle to it, God has not left a single flower to languish because it had no beauty to cause it to lift up its head. A wild flower! For every cultivated flower, rose, chrysanthemum, gladiolus, or glorious iris, the great Florist, God, be thanked. But for me, may

I be let wander among the wild flowers. There is a flower named by aristocratic flower fanciers, the poor man's orchid. I will in whispers confess that I love it as I do not the stately rich man's orchid, which truly grows wild blooming from rotten bark and tree boles in tropic forests, but whose rarity is prohibitive to poor folks. The poor man's orchid, simple and with a touch of surprise on it like early spring flowers, steps into my heart like a star beam. I will admit I love wild flowers as I do not tame flowers or garden flowers or conservatory flowers; and if I be chidden for my humble tastes, I will smilingly take my stand alongside Jesus when he sings like a spring bird building its nest, "Solomon in all his glory is not arrayed like unto one of these." I will accompany him in his appreciations. I will let my eyes rest where he looks. I will inhale the fragrance I note him leaning to enjoy. He shall be my preceptor in flowers. I will consider the lilies. They last so brief a while, these wild flowers. To-day they are, but not to-morrow. The ignorant pass them by unseen. The aristocrat will not give them a glance, for they are common flowers. And comes the Gardener and makes a nosegay to wear on his heart forever. And it is a nosegay of wildflowers. I will. I will consider the lilies. I will consider the lilies how they grow and where they grow. I will not pick them but love them. Smell them, lying full length on the

grass or sand or stones of the brook to inhale their modest fragrance. I will climb dizzy mountain acclivities to find them on Alpine meadows bordering the glaciers, to watch the wild flowers blaze for a furtive moment. I will go down into deep canyons to see the canyon wall burn for a moment with a glory not its own, and will go where only the samphire gatherers go to bear away planted in my heart one lone wild flower. I will sit in woodland shade where the violets companion with the swaying shadows. I will run out to meet the prairie flowers as the winds do. I will wade in the golden sea of autumnal Spanish needle flowers and toss with the tossing plumes of the wild golden glow with its tumultuous splendor as if they were fall winds in bloom. I will tramp all day on the granite-sand upland of Cape Cod, and see the wild tiger lilies blossoming; and I will invade the meadows in summer splendor and in the cold days of the new spring where dandelions make melody in color unto the Lord. I will go where daisies watch the sun and extol him in their hearts. I will refresh my spirit with the society of sunflowers innumerable in multitude. I will make pilgrimages to smell the trailing arbutus under his coverlet of brown leaves. I will consider the grass flowers and the troop of flowers each in season as it romps out to greet the sun and the sky and leaves his petals on the grass. I will watch the water lilies floating on the

stream. I will walk to the pasture and the upland and the fence corners, where the wild roses bloom. I can feel them though I do not see them. All the involved roses the rose fanciers have diligently striven to make are not to me like one wild rose found in a lonesome place where the cattle and sheep have cropped the green grass close about it, but have never disfigured the wild rose and its blossom. When I stray into such a part of God's garden I want the day never to close, the sun never to set, the stars never to rise. I see the wild rose with my heart. I plant them where I have long since planted the Rose of Sharon.

I have longed till my longing is like a prayer to have been with Jesus out of doors when he stooped to make the wild windflower immortal. But whether to be out of doors with him or him to be out of doors with me, I wot not which is lovelier. Him here and out of doors with me, but yonder I shall be out of doors with him, where bloom the wild flowers of eternity, tossed by the sweet wind that blows across the hills of life.

There is, I know, a back land field in heaven where the wild roses bloom, and I will hie me hither in the everlasting spring, and coming among them shall be sure to overtake the Infinite Lover of the fields, whose other name is Jesus.

XVII

JESUS AND THE WAYSIDE WELL

“**T**HEN cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob’s well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well; and it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never

thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."

The pathos of painting is that the colors fade. The glorious chromes of great Turner are fading already. The Old Tremaraire ere long will be a blotch of shadow. All the antique Greek paintings are faded long ago. The Parthenon, whose lovely architraves were painted in brilliant colors, shows no tint any more. The sun and the wind have wiped out all that antique splendor. Like a sunset cloud have those colors faded. Only the vivid pigments in the Pharaohs' tombs keep their glow; and the secret of those colors is lost.

Albeit here now is a picture unfading as the sky. All the radiances of that far-gone scene blaze everlasting color as the day they occurred in that radiant happening ages ago.

That ultramarine sky, that bewildering light, that stern realization of shadow, the domed heavens, that wayside well, that garrulous woman with her waterpot forgotten, that dusty Man sitting on the well curb in the sun—they are deathless things and are limned with colors which lose no tint in all the ages of rain and wind and blinding light. Those colors hold.

This scene refuses to become a picture. It remains a scene forever transpiring: The disappearing disciples wending cityward, the way-wearied Man of Galilee sitting on the hot well curb; the near-at-hand mountains, a blithe foot-step approaching, a woman drawing near with waterpot on her shoulder; then the waterpot lifted from her shoulder and let quickly and deftly and gently down into the cool depths of the well, and the lithe, brown, strong, and shapely woman's hand drawing up the waterpot full of water; a plash of the water dripping back into the well as the waterpot ascends from the cool depths, the arrival at the well-top—all this and no words spoken by the busy woman or the seated Man with the wet water pitcher set on the well curb inviting and cool; then the Man's voice breaking the silence with "Give me to drink." What a silver voice it is! How it startles the woman until she nearly drops the pitcher, so that she remembers the voice through all the years afterward till she died, and was heard to whisper to herself through the after-years, "That voice!" The voice was like running water for a melody or like starlight set to music. That voice! And then proceeded that surprising dialogue between a crude and garrulous and wicked woman and the Living Water.

To an audience of one the greatest Preacher earth has had preached the most beautiful and bewildering sermon, which dug a well of wonder

and salvation in the auditor's heart and has dug innumerable wells of salvation in the hearts of mankind since, and will continue doing so while mankind endures. He spilled a universe into one wicked woman's heart until, despite her babble and female garrulosity, she forgot her loquacity and her waterpot and went into the city a woman raptured away from her sin and herself by the wonder of God.

“Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshiped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: When he is come, he will tell us all things.

Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he. And upon this came his disciples, and marveled that he talketh with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her? The woman then left her waterpot and went her way into the city and saith to the men, Is not this the Christ?"

This scene has in it nothing vagrant. It refuses to depart. Stars retrace their steps across the sky. Here is no retracing since there is no recession. The voices of the incongruous dialogists are as clear in the air as on that sweaty noon. The music of the voice of the Living Water chimes on so sweetly as to make the tears start.

The Maker of the Fountains has come to earth. No wonder he sat on the well. He knew as no one else could know the witchery of water. He channeled the rivers. He barriered the seas and taught them their sobbing reiteration of voices and made them ways for ships. He placed the wayside springs to gurgle and to drink. He made water prevalent on the ground and in the sky. He made a staple of life as lovely a thing as the poet's loveliest dream, and lovelier. He taught rivers to run swiftly and to fall asleep in the sun like a little child. He taught the moss to gather up the dew and the misty morning rain and in due time to drip them out, slow dripping down the slippery faces of the rocks or into crevices of stony ledges and hide them

in great secrecy in the forgotten places of the hills, so that all the year through they should tinkle out somewhere as a surprise where passing beast and flying bird and sweaty traveler and the yoked oxen could pause and drink and be refreshed.

Water is the life of the world. It grows the grasses and trees and grain—drink to everything. Water is a stern necessity of life. The moon has no water and so has no green thing, growing thing, nor beast, nor bird; nor man. It can reflect light but cannot nurture life. And when the Well of Water says he is the water of life he has said all that can be said. Nothing can go behind that and nothing can go beyond it. Without water there could be no food. All things are its offspring.

Springs of water infatuate me. They are so smiling, so beguiling, so clandestine, such kinsmen of shadows, so ultra reticent as to their origin, so careless in their voyaging, so unfretted in their journey, so regardless of their destination, so swift to give back the overleaning sky, blue for blue, arch for arch, cloud for cloud; so generous in service, so true to their Maker to be "the servants of all"; so invitational, saying to all thirsty things and folks, "Drink from me"; such an inobtrusive beneficence that the only explanation of them at all satisfactory is that they are the creation of the Well of Water, springing up into everlasting life.

How growing things climb close to a water spring! The mosses are there on the damp rocks or making carpet of living, yielding green on the ground. Here the fronded ferns gather close and lovingly like chickens about their mother. Here the wild flowers lean near to see their faces reflected in the witching pool. Here shrubs and trees scuffle for a place like children for the place on their father's knee. I have lain in the bosky shadows near a silver spring for hours of daylight just to watch the procession of users of the spring coming and going. The watchful birds come and drink and bathe and fly away refreshed. The chipmunk and the squirrel and the weary crow come and drink and are glad, and in sequestered forests the timid deer with wary feet come and drink and bound away. And the spring gives them all drink and its chalice is still running overfull.

Across the continent have I watched and found and tasted the springs of water. I have drunk out of every spring but one in a day's journey of one hundred and fifty miles through the Adirondacks, and purpose in repentant mood to take the journey again to drink out of that one neglected spring. I cannot resist their bonnie invitation. I feel as if I were drinking music, they seem so as they issue forth. I feel as if I slaked my summer thirst on mystery, so hidden is their origin. I feel as if I were drinking from a cup of God, for the waters answer so to the un-

heard calling of the far-away sea. It is all majesty, all mystery, all loveliness, all poetry, all music. And justly so. The Well of Water it is that suffices to replenish all living things.

A well differs from a spring. A spring owes itself wholly to God. No man helped fashion it. It is in an accurate sense a gift of God. A well is a joint product of God and man. As always, God has to be around or nothing happens. Men never can begin things. God is the only Beginner. That saying which confronts us like a sun at the east window of the Book of God, "In the beginning God," is ubiquitously true. Men can further things; they cannot begin them. God still holds the key to the door. He made the door and he made the lock and he has the key. He must unlock; then men may put shoulders to the door and push it ajar. God created water. I learned in chemistry water was H_2O . That was a chemical blunder. Water is not H_2O . Water is water, and water is a gift of God and an invention of God. Before water was water it was H_2O , but not when it is water. God is so much the friend of life that he hides water in channels "hid from the eyes of the wise and prudent." A well is man's digging to find the hid channels where God lets his waters flow.

I recall how when my father and I were on earth together, once we two dug a well. It was summer and the sun was ardent and the wells we had were dried up. So he and I—bearded

man and beardless boy—became partners with God to give the cattle drink. It was hard work but it was poetry. I dug deeper, deeper. I dug on. On the ground my father wound the windlass and took up the dirt. I looked out as the well deepened and saw a star. That was pay for digging the well even if we had found no water. Deeper, deeper I dug; and the voice at the windlass called, "Any signs of water, boy?" "No sign, father." "Dig deeper," the father said, and lowered the bucket for more dirt my hands had dug. Where was God? He was filling the earth with hidden water. What is a well? What a father and a son helped God to dig to give the cattle a drink. And so my father and I helped God till the cattle came and stood with solemn, expectant eyes until the water trough was filled from the well of water which but for man and boy would have never been.

"And Jacob's well was there." Some far-off man had pity on the drought and had digged long, dreary digging the story which is put as in a motto, "There they digged for a well and strove for that also." There is always striving to get and to keep the living springs which men gather to and call a wayside well. But beasts and men and little children must have water.

And this well and the windlass and the bucket dripping as it rises and the cool luxury of hot lips cooling at the well.

God and man to dig the well and then the

others! A well is not a walled-up selfishness. It is a walled-in generosity. It is meant for others. Those who dig it die; those who wall it up die; the well stays. Those diggers of wells gave it to to-day and to the to-morrows. Jacob's Well was there. Why, where is Jacob now? Gone these centuries—he and the Rachel he loved. "This is the parcel of ground Jacob gave to his son Joseph, dear Rachel's son." Where is Joseph? Father and mother and Joseph all departed, yet Joseph's well is here. Aye, gladly, Joseph's well is here.

And the well makes and gathers friends. So many come to the well. It is such a neighborly place to lean on and at which to talk and smile and ask how the woman and the children are and where the college son has gone and the daughter with her husband. And on this well sits the Christ. The friendly God sits on the curb of the friendly well making talk with a woman on a sunny day: the friendly God and the friendly well.

He will drink from his own well, and he will dig a deep well in the dry ground of a wicked woman's barren heart. And he did. "And the woman forgot her waterpot and went into the city with bowed head and cleansed heart, with the well of water springing up into everlasting life and singing like the skylarks cannot sing, 'Is not this the Christ?'"

And the ages have replied, "It is."

XVIII

THE GARDENER

“**W**HEN Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, . . . for Jesus oft-times resorted thither with his disciples.”

“Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane.”

“Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulcher wherein was never man yet laid.”

“But Mary stood without at the sepulcher weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulcher, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary,”—

Somebody cared to make the world wonderful and variegated and immethodical. Somebody

was an artist of unconventional sort. The old gardeners made gardens so methodical that a wild bird would not have taken his flight across them, nor would a wild flower have taken root in them. Certainly, a wild flower would not have been permitted there by those clumsy men who call themselves gardeners. And the old Italian gardeners, with their statuary where there should have been violets, gave no room for the play of spontaneity that real artistry demands. Formal gardening may yet make a misanthrope of an otherwise good man, I being the man.

The Gardener who laid out the garden of the world and made it so passing fair that who speak in its praise become enforced rhapsodists was not of this inartistic type. He is like springtime which comes with garments flying to the winds and eyes of June blue, and feet wet with dew which does not dry away with the shining of the sun, and from a reticule billowing and snowy as a cloud sows all the ways to lavish loveliness. There is nothing methodical in springtime rapture—just laughter and music and whimsicality and generosity.

I was in the Adirondacks when spring was new and the upper mountains were lilac-hued with the buds of birch trees. The skies were nebulous with clouds and every brook was babbling just to hear itself. And I came on a meadow edging a river. Nobody kept the field but The Gardener. He had been ahead of us;

and that pasture, where quiet kine lay down on the river rim and noted not their shadows in the stream, he had sown to bluets. It was Sunday, and I had been preaching and was on the way in the afternoon to another preaching, when the pasture beckoned to me with the sweet imperativeness of spring and bade me tarry, come in and be poet for a while. Not that I needed solicitation; for when did I need inviting to stream bank and river brim and flower-sprent meadow and dappled sky and climbing mountain, or bowlders in the mountain brook, and birch trees shining white as marble pillars against the gray-bluish background of the mountains? As the humming bird knows its way to where it may, gather lichen wherewith to build its tiny nest along a reaching branch, so do I know my way to where the wild winds romp with clouds and flowers and bear away fragrance of innumerable springtimes. Yet, an invitation is an invitation, and here was I outdoors on my way from preaching to preaching invited in by an ecstasy of beauty. The bluets caught me with a tug like gravitation. I sprawled on the damp, yielding turf and watched the multitude of tiny blossoms so perfect, so multitudinous, so spendthrift, so uninvited by the taxpayer who thought he owned the pasture, so unsignifying to browsing cattle and unnoted by the newly arrived birds, so unseen by the hurrying journeyers who passed that way; and my preacher friend and I,

friends of God, and of the outdoors, tarried a little space to do them reverence. The Gardener had been there. We seemed to hear him singing just around the bend of the river. "I am making a new earth" was what The Gardener sang, and was plainly what the Gardener had been doing. A new earth sowed to bluets with their earth smell and their gentle blue like a blue sky and blended with spring rain—that is what the Gardener had made. My friend counted the bluets in an inch of space and then multiplied to discover how many might be in that Adirondack pasturefield. And I have no mind to set down in unimaginative type what our arithmetic brought us.

A formal gardener studies parsimony; The Gardener studies generosity. In one of his essays John Burroughs sets down the names of the wild weeds that are really wild flowers. It is worth while buying the book to read the list. Wayside weeds are one of The Gardener's loveliest devices. They are the scrollwork where-with he ornaments the pages of his book of *All the Year Round*.

There is a Sweet Somebody who delights in gardening. That is a reposeful thing to know and also exhilarating. The world is this Sweet Somebody's garden, where the unnumbered children of men encounter all kinds of greenery and blossoming. A reckless profusion is in all this Gardener's gardening. He is ever lavish, ever

informal. When man-made gardens are at their best, they strive toward the artistic immethodicality of God. Informal gardens are God's gardens. Men plant by straight lines. The Gardener plants by what seems, to our slipshod methods of thinking, chance, as when against a century-old oak, cedar trees by twos or threes pressing up so close to it as to seem to be rooting in the roots of the oak. These things constitute and contribute to endless surprise in God's gardening. We cannot forecast his plantings when on a high escarpment of pure limestone, white as chalk cliffs, there are climbing companies of cedars, rooting we know not how or why. A hill above affords abundant space for cedars to root. There is no lack of ground. Yet here they are clinging to the rock face by hundreds and climbing so closely that their elbows touch, and they cannot grow large. They are bound to be dwarfed because they would not give each other room for growth on this bleak escarpment, fronting the west, where the sun all the summer through blazing, oftentimes burns hot against the standing place of the cedars. There they cling like soldiers essaying the taking of the citadel. There they are an argument against all reasonableness, and immethodical loveliness like a girl's hair streaming to the wind.

A bit of a stream—any bed of any stream—what a constant delight it is! Never two alike.

The vagabondage of running water is a thing bound to set the soul to dreaming: a mountain stream with boulders thrown about as if the mountain had been throwing stones for fun. And any stream with its lovely miscellaneity—never one duplicating another, with boulders lodged in heterogeneous places and combinations manifold as kaleidoscopic shapes, but never one ungraceful or inartistic. The superabundance of genius which blindfolds and throwing, in vast chance, but never by any strenuous chance does an ungraceful thing. These are the artisticalities of the angels. Hundreds of prairie streams, mountain tarns, meadow runnels, trifling rivulets, brawling brooks, glacial rivers have my feet stumbled along or into, and never one by any chance unbeautiful or unattractive. Every one invited to stay by it forever. The tree trunks, caught as they were hurled down by mountain flood or freshet or floated by neglectful current, made a picture. Had God gifted me with an artistic hand (as I trust he may in my next adventure of life in life eternal), I should have become insistent on sketching such water courses as I myself have ever set eyes on, it would take me millions of ages to have completed my artistic sketchbook of the world.

The landscape gardeners, well intentioned mainly, do things more or less formally whether they design to do so or not, just as painters of

faces seldom can paint more than one face. The limitations of genius are very real and perceptible. The Gardener has no pet combination. He tosses out his hand and drops a handful of stars or plants or flowers or trees or lakes or foothills or mountains or mountain gorges or distant peaks. He walks out in the dark and spreads the sky with stars, and they are all grouped in exquisite loveliness. His rambling movements have all the cadence of exquisite music. "He doeth all things well," was what one company of lookers-on said one day. And "It was good," was the verdict of the Artist on his own work. There is no debating that there is a Gardener whose gardens are spontaneous as a sunup, no crimson and purple clouds archipelagoing the morning skies.

We say of artists that they are studying up new combinations. Certainly that is praiseworthy whether they succeed or not. But it is as apparent as cloudless noon that there was engaged in the making of this world an Artist who needs not to study up to make new combinations. He said, "Let there be light, and it was so." "He spake and it was done," and not two leaves nor flowers nor trees nor faces nor anything whatsoever are alike. No two ranges of mountains in the great garden are alike. No two mountain peaks are alike. No two elm trees are alike, nor palms nor orange trees nor pepper trees nor bamboo brakes

nor stalks of maize. This prodigality is infinite.

Dramatist Will Shakespeare said, as became a dramatist, "All the world's a stage," while we more fittingly make the claim that all the world is a garden. Some Gardener with beautiful undesigned designedness has made the world a garden where some time we undergardeners work; but always the Gardener gardens, growing things, ordaining new combinations of beauty or sublimity or grandeur or quietness and peace. He has so large a garden. There is never scarcity of room. He has plenty of elbow room. He is so careless of space that he covers two thirds of his garden with seas, and he clutters up great remaining spaces with mountains or deserts or swamps or sand dunes and sea-made marshes and forests and wild-flower gardens and oases which the date palm shadows. Ah, me, could we but see the Gardener!

"Supposing him to be the gardener"—could it be that here is the Gardener for whom we have strained our eyes till they become bloodshot as if we traveled camel-borne all day across the burning Sahara? This Body seems to have frequented gardens. Of the Garden of Gethsemane it is recorded that "He often resorted hither." Certain it is that thither he came when he was on his march toward a towering cross on which he meant to die. Hither he came to spend the last evening of his purely earthly life. And from

this garden he went to another garden in which to die, for "in the place where he was crucified there was a garden." There in that nameless garden he died. Could it be that he was the Gardener? Is a cross compatible with a garden? Can death and the garden be compatibles? We ordinary folk should know the answer to that question. Death is part of a garden. Leaves wither in a garden. Garden stuff dies in a garden. Fruits from a garden ripen and fall if not gathered. Trees in a garden fall as we have seen them in the forest fall in the storm or fall in the calm.

"Leaves have their time to fall
And flowers to wither at the north wind's
breath,"

sobbed the poetess; yet, be we poets or not, we know that. Dying is a part of life. The cross belonged to a garden. Deeds of high resolve and splendid daring are customary in the garden of life. "And in the garden is a sepulcher." How is that? We heard it was a garden, and, lo, here are cross and grave! Truly. Where things die there must be buryingground. There is an acre for the dead. The high discovery is to find that acre may be God's acre.

We may not quarrel with the cross nor with the grave. We want no world where there is no cross. We want no unheroic world. We want our chance to "endure all things," and "having

done all things to stand." Herohood must not die out of men's hearts. We will, therefore, kiss the cross; nor will we scowl at the grave. Where age and pain and sin are frequent travelers on the road there must be a grave.

The thing to regard with fixed eyes as those who look for a belated sail is that life is not a cross nor a grave but is a garden. Cross and grave are possessions of the garden. Where Jesus was crucified and where he was entombed was in a garden. What cheer that brings to the heart like a bluebird's call across the snows! In a garden—"But Mary stood without at the sepulcher weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulcher, and seeth two angels in white, sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have lain him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary."

Could this man in the garden hard by cross and grave by any high chance be the Gardener?

"Supposing him to be the gardener"! My heart, you beat so like a sea at surge. Suppose it is the gardener!

But this guesser is a woman red-eyed with weeping. She has a broken heart. She is a sinner whom Jesus has forgiven and whose heart Jesus has cleansed, and who had kissed his feet and anointed them with precious ointment and wiped them with the hair of her head in adoration. And this is she who had washed his feet with repentant tears. Now, He is dead and her heart is desolate. She has come to bring spices for his burial and an angel has turned her away saying in words which she cannot comprehend, "He is not here, he is risen"; and, sobbing and bruised like a reed in a storm, she encounters a Man early rising as herself, and "Supposing him to be the gardener" she asks him where her Forgiver is. A witless, weeping woman! Hold thy peace, friend. Thou speakest not wisely. This is a weeping woman with a forgiven and broken and contrite and loving heart, who through tears sees as all besides have not seen. Not a witless woman but a wistful and a wifful woman. This sweet guesser at a truth more beautiful than day-break—"Supposing him to be the gardener."

And Jesus said, "Mary." Then she knew. The Gardener! Heart of mine, is he for whom thou hast wearied and whose garments thou hast sometimes seen moving like the glow of the sunset cloud, the Gardener in his garden? The

grave was in the garden, but the Gardener was in the garden, and the grave is empty that was occupied. This is not hereafter the acre of the dead, but God's acre, where our graves are open to the south because the Gardener hath hailed them forth.

The Gardener in his garden forever—and not alone!

XIX

JESUS AND THE SUN

“**T**HEN shall the righteous shine forth
as the sun.”

“The sun was setting.”

“What I tell you in darkness, that speak
ye in light.”

“Let your light so shine before men that
they may see your good works and glorify
your Father which is in heaven.”

“When the Son of man shall come in his
glory.”

“In him was life; and the life was the light
of men. And the light shineth in darkness
and the darkness comprehended it not.”

“The same came for a witness, to bear
witness of the Light, that all men through
him might believe. He was not that Light,
but was sent to bear witness of that Light.
That was the true Light which lighteth
every man that cometh into the world.”

“The Word was made flesh, and dwelt
among us, (and we beheld his glory, the
glory as of the only begotten of the Father,)
full of grace and truth.”

“As it began to dawn.”

“They came unto the sepulcher at the ris-
ing of the sun.”

“But when the morning was now come.”

“The Father of Glory.”

"Until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts."

"That great city, the holy Jerusalem, . . . having the glory of God."

"And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

"For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, . . . lest his deeds should be re-proved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."

"Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth."

"While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them."

The beautiful Gospel which recites the clinging incident of Jesus at the wayside well says, "Jesus sat thus on the well." I am poetically interested in that *thus*—"Sat *thus*." Why the "*thus*"? We may pass it by prosaically by saying it is a locative adverb and give it no thought. Or we may make it a point of dreaming like a wandering cloud. I will hold to the poetic in-

terpretation. John Zebedee was a poet and he writes "Jesus sat *thus* on the well"—that "thus," that haunting "*thus*."

The day was at its sultry noon. The well curb was hot as desert sands. And there the tired Saviour took his seat. But he was clearly immersed in thought, say you. What thought? There sat he down indifferent to the scorching noon. I think he was looking at the sun. I think he sat there looking the sun full in the face. He was enamored in the blaze of its glory. We are not able to encounter the full-face splendor of the noonlight sun. Our eyes will not bear it. The sun's torch scorches our eyeballs. We must look at the sun through shadowed glass perforce. It was not so with Jesus. He lit the sun. Himself was the glory at which the solar splendor lit its torch. So Jesus could look the sun out of countenance.

On the well he sat *thus* looking at the sun. It fascinated him. He could not have enough of it. While the disciples went into the city to buy a midday meal he sat *thus* on the well looking, looking the sun full in the face, looking, looking at the sun. God enjoys what he has himself made. A thing is not insipid to God because he created it. An artist does not lose interest in his pictures because he painted them, nor a poet interest in his poem because he penned it. God does not like a child throw a thing pettishly aside because he knows all about it. God

is not tired of his playthings. His interest abides. He made the sun and stays alive to its wonder.

If we knew the wonder of things, they would never tire us. Our ignorance is the source of our failure in interest. Jesus was not ignorant. He remembered the birthday of the sun.

The sun—where is it voyaging? What is its biography? what its chemistry? Why do not its forces burn low and burn out? Why does it not stumble in its journey? Why do its arms and hands of gravitation not grow weary of holding its satellite worlds? Why is there no laggard step of age on this hoary orb? How can its rays cross the multimillions of miles of freezing space and lose no volt of their heat nor a candle flicker of light? How has it the immense supply of light which fills the huge inter-planetary space with light as radiant as that which spills on our trudging earth? How does it possess in one solar ray a trinity of light, heat, power? Plainly, to a knowing mind the sun is not an incident. It is an epoch. Why is the sun's heat different from that of coal and wood, since they catch their heat from him? Sun heat comes through glass: wood heat and coal heat are held in by glass. Clearly, to a brainy mind, the sun furnishes theme for endless interest. Jesus sat *thus* on the well curb lost in delight of the sun. He needed no cloud to shelter his eyes or dim its face from him. He was at home with its glory. He was devotee of

the light, for "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." God's self is the explanatory clause of the things he makes. With or without intent he will shine himself forth as a star does. God is the reason for things. How he is, is how things should be, and how right things are. Naturally, he made man in his own image. How else? And the sun is faint adumbration of his great light. Thus it was that Jesus was always following in the footsteps of the sun and loving the sun. A Great Light had risen who knew the joy of the sun that brings the morning and the day's work.

Day is the gift of the sun. Night too is the gift of the sun. The coming of the sun is day and the going of the sun is night. It holds us on our starry way. By the sun's bidding this earth takes yearly voyage of about one million miles a day, so dizzying a pace as no imagination can stagger toward; and with all this unimaginable velocity the dust still gathers on the summer flowers and on the window sills as if the world were standing still as a sleeping owl on a dead branch of an ancient tree. The earth's farthering from the sun brings winter; its nearing the sun brings spring; its still closer coming to the sun brings fruitful summer. We are bondservants of the sun. If it pulled us nearer, we should be consumed with heat. If it let us slip farther from its fireside glow, we should stumble on an iceberg in a lonely space. The sun must not

slumber lest we die of cold or heat. Our leaves and flowers and grass and all the color scheme of earth are borrowed of the sun. The growth of plants and trees is the immediate ministration of the sun. Our coalfields and our woodyards are borrowings from the glowing fireplace of the sun. Our earth is a bit broken from the sun so that we are made of the sun materials. We stay beggars at his gates. Crumbs from his table are our daily bread. By the sun the birds go to bed. When the sun sets the birds bid day good night with plenteous melody, and when the sun brings day spring and "the day breaks and the shadows flee away," then the birds break into exultant song. The sun suffices to break blackness into misty memories and shines long streamers of glory across the sky. The sun builds rainbows over the waterfalls and in the sky. Plants will grow stooped as a hunchback leaning toward the light, and trees will twist them into whorls to get them out into the sun. We be debtors to the sun in such multitudinous ways as we cannot reckon.

God made the light and accounted it good; and we use the light and cannot walk without it nor grow daily bread or eat it without the daily sun. We work, we play, we see, we catch all the tints delicate as a gossamer of the sun as well as from it. Small wonder, therefore, that Jesus was drenched in spirit by the light, or that he said, "I am the light of the world,"

which was a saying wider than man's thought or bravest understanding. All these astronomic years since his advent the meaning of the sun has been widening on our understanding; and at each advance in our knowledge of the sun we have seen how Jesus is that and has been that always. "The true light," the everlasting glory is what he is. He is light: we are a light lit by him. We see by him—others see by us. He is ultimate glory, we borrowed glory. We are at daybreak or at sunrise, he at never-waning noon.

So we dimly see why Jesus was so insistent on the light. Nothing shall be hid. Everything must make way toward and into the light.

At daybreak, or before it, he rose from the dead. He wanted sunup. He wanted to see the sun rise as he wanted to see the stars rise. He saw them both. He "brought life and immortality to light" that resurrection morning.

Suns pass under temporary cloud or set; but not this Sun. It is always sunup now. "He is not here," the angels clamored. It is sunup in the grave and in the valley of the shadow of death. All glory everywhere.

"Jesus sat thus on the well" and watched the sun. Jesus walked thus the dry and trodden ways of men watching the sun. Jesus when he talked that high talk which has filled the world with music spake persistently about the sun and the light, light and more light and deathless,

indistinguishable light. He will not let light alone. He cannot, he must not for our health and help and illumining. He shineth "more and more unto the perfect day."

I will go out in the sunlight with Jesus. His voice shall lead me afield where the warm sun makes the world rejoice and adventure into spring.

The saying of Jesus, "The righteous shall shine forth as the sun," has been called the sublimest figure in literature. I doubt not it is. It was a saying but natural to him who uttered it. He knew, and hung goodness in the sky so that when we looked we could not tell which the sun was—the righteous or the orb which makes the midday noon. We are swept into a realm of glory because we are caught into the mercy of God and the adventure of Jesus Christ, Lord of all. The measureless holds both our hands.

Daybreak is what caught Harriet Beecher Stowe up into ecstasy.

"Still, still with thee, when purple morning
breaketh,

When the bird waketh, and the shadows flee;
Fairer than morning, lovelier than daylight,
Dawns the sweet consciousness, I am with
thee.

"Alone with thee, amid the mystic shadows,
The solemn hush of nature newly born;
Alone with thee in breathless adoration,
In the calm dew and freshness of the morn.

"As in the dawning o'er the waveless ocean,
 The image of the morning star doth rest,
 So in the stillness, thou beholdest only
 Thine image in the waters of my breast.

"Still, still to thee! as to each newborn morning,
 A fresh and solemn splendor still is given,
 So does this blessed consciousness awaking,
 Breathe each day nearness unto thee and
 heaven.

"When sinks the soul, subdued by toil, to
 slumber,
 Its closing eyes look up to thee in prayer;
 Sweet the repose beneath thy wings o'ershading,
 But sweeter still, to wake and find thee there.

"So shall it be at last, in that bright morning,
 When the soul waketh, and life's shadows
 flee;
 Oh in that hour, fairer than daylight dawning,
 Shall rise the glorious thought—I am with
 thee."

This poem will never die. The Sun of Righteousness is in the breaking morning.

A Christian man was in the valley of the shadow of death—his last night on the earth. Beside him sat a friend the night through out of love for his dying friend and so that the sound of a friend's voice or the kindly touch of a friend's hand might not be absent as he pilgrimed through the dark. All the lights were lit the

whole night through, for it is dim walking in the Death Valley, and many stumble. When the night was at its darkest not a long space before the dawn the dying man opened his eyes wide, looked round about, peered in his friend's face with querying, surprised gaze; and in an inflection of surprise said, "Put out the lights; the sun is up." And then he closed his eyes quietly in death. And the watcher said to the dead man's minister: "He said, 'Put out the lights; the sun is up.' Wasn't that strange?" No, brother, not strange, but very beautiful.

The man who died was one of Jesus' friends, and what need had he for the shining of earthly lamps when on him rose the Daylight of Eternity? Jesus is The Sun.

"Put out the lights; the sun is up."

XX

JESUS AND THE SKY

“**H**E answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather : for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to-day : for the sky is red and lowering.”

“And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars ; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity ; the sea and the waves roaring ; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth : for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.”

“And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him : and there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

“Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered : others said, An angel spake to him.”

“For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west ; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”

"And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him."

"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

"While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen."

"And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven."

"In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight."

"And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven."

"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and

beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."

"And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight."

Jesus came from the sky: he went into the sky. He came by starlight: he went away by daylight. He was sky born: he was earth born. "Before Abraham was, I am," is the never-to-be-forgotten story of his before-Bethlehem days. And Poet John the beloved said in words resounding as waves of the mighty sea:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the

world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace."

How familiar to Jesus, therefore, was the sky! How gravely natural it was that when he had duly redeemed this world he loved well enough to die for that he should walk back to heaven through the open skies! What a spring walk it was, and the sky blue and a cloud hanging white like a drift of snow along the way he took! A spring cloud drifting to give rain to the fields and flowers, the trees and the blooming grapes and the waterbrook and the sheep and the young lambs bleating and frisking about their mothers—such a cloud opened its arms to receive him. The sky is where he said he would be lifted up; and he was. In the blue sky he died.

Was there ever anybody so enamored of the sky as Jesus, or could there be? Where he had

set the stars walking he walked with vast elation and swift feet. The stars at walking pace outran the flying eagle; but who cometh along the upper skies afoot and barefoot, whose deliberate pace leaves wheeling stars so far behind? Who could it be but God? Who built the sky and lit the sun and who "callesth the stars by their name" may well have thoroughfare through the sky above the sun, behind the sky into that eternity whereof he came to tell and the way to which he came to show.

I can well believe that while Jesus blessed the disciples with those blessed, pierced hands uplifted over them he walked up and "a cloud received him out of their sight." He walked so fast they could not with their dim eyes of longing have traced him far. We cannot trace the flight of our beloved when they pass to go to God. They wing too swiftly. But we need not see them go. They strike the beaten path Christ made that immortal ascension morning. And they shall in no case miss the way.

The sky is a beatitude to which we are so accustomed that we scarcely give it heed, yet a beatitude so luring, so lovely, so exultant like a host of angels with golden trumpets at their lips, so beyond all phrasing in words that to this hour it remains without adequate comment, and will while the world lasts. Ruskin nor Shakespeare can garment this loveliness. It is unapproachable as the sea. They, beyond all the sons of

men, should have been equal to this great exploit. Still the sky wonder is undiminished and waits the "revelation of the sons of God" to say of the sky as the sky should be said of.

Sky gives room, only room. It holds sunup and sunset. It holds stars and man and much glory besides. It holds moonlight and church spires, mountains and mornings. It sends down snowflakes like petals of wind flowers blown in the spring.

The sky is ageless. No wrinkles gather with its accumulated years. As the sky was, it is. As Jesus saw it, so it remains.

No one that ever watched the sky with seeing eyes can forget the unapproachable dome of ultramarine blue. Who that thinks must wonder what pillars hold that dome on high. All the domes man's skill has thrust on high and held there are but bubbles blown compared with the fair dome that roofs the world. From the sky our builders learned the dome. The sky is creative. It is circular. It has circumference and diameter but not an angle or a straight line anywhere.

Oh the mercy of the sky, the blue sky! Who save God could be artist enough to contrive that artistic sufficiency of bending blue? The gaudy tints come and go. They flash and fade. The sky burns red and holds the purple of morning and is suffused with insufferable glory. The sky grows ashen and sober. The far and near are

shut out by mists. They are choked with falling snows, but afterward the sky tints fade and the snows pass away but the amazing blue abides, the amethyst of June, or the sapphire in December, but ever blue sky where angels tuned their harps on Christmas night, where birds wing their wild flight like billows of cloud when driven by the wind, where eagles fling their tawny wings wide on the upholding air and the sky sustains them.

If a body were raptured away into some wild world where he could see the sky no more, then that lonely voyager would wander desolate calling with a voice of heartbreak, "O the blue sky, the blue sky!"

Artists are masters in the art of harmonizing colors. "This does not harmonize with that," the artists say, and with a tone of finality. And truly inharmony in colors tears an artistic temperament to tatters. We respect the artist and his judgment. We have all had our artistic nerves wracked by inharmonious colors. We may not sin against the Great Artist's color scheme. The Chief Artist has studied out all possible harmony in color tones.

Everything harmonizes with the blue sky. Yet not with a blue room or with a blue dress. That seems bizarre, for is not blue blue? Is there respect of persons in color? This is no place for controversy. This is a simple question of observed facts. You must study what you may

place in a blue room but not what you place in a blue sky. A blue sky fits everything and everything fits a blue sky. Greens and reds and lilacs and oxblood crimsons and Titian reds and sunflowers and crocuses and daffodil yellows and poppy wine-reds and blacks and browns and whites. If anybody thinks that a skillful artist studies to match his colors, how can such a body doubt that God is the Chief Artist? If a living-room requires rare artistic skill in its decoration to make it a place for lovely rest and quiet, how much more is such skill required in the great living room called the world? Nothing jars against a blue sky. The wildest glow of glory that Turner ever put on the evening sky fits the sky like a petal fits a flower. What bird jars with the blue sky in which it flies? The cardinal like a newly lighted torch, the blackbird with ebony coat, the bluejay with his spring blue blouse, the blue bird with his sea-blue coat, the indigo bird with his audacity of blue, the catbird with his ashen coat, the mourning dove in her shotsilk attire, the sparrow in his dirty working clothes and his drab quarreling clothes—all these are in harmony with the blue sky.

How the white billowy summer clouds feel at home in the blue sky dome! How majestically the black storm clouds fit into the miles on miles of blue expanse of the heavens! How the scorching flames of a sunset or an afterglow seem to be held like a cardinal flower against the meadow

breast of the sky! How the wild goldenglow tosses its glorious glow of many flowers on long, graceful, slender, plum-colored stalks, as if waving signals to the skies! How the paintroot, strong and stocky, holds its belligerent red up for the sky to see! I have in some years seen a mile-long stretch of this flower like a thin line of fire facing a roadway and so utterly at home in the blue of the sky. How the foam of white asters like the surf of the sea churned into storm along a shallow place of the sea toss their billows like a wind-cloud chased under the wide expanse of a prairie sky. How the purple asters, blooming after most other flowers are frost-bitten till they are called by such as are neighborly with wild growths, "the frost flowers," match the blue of the late fall sky, as if themselves were a tear dripped from the blue sky, weeping because the sun was moving south, and the swallows were gone or going! How regal against the sky is the beech wood on flame with the wild yellow glow like yellow butterflies' wings! And the oak's blaze and special glory in autumn blows out other leaves before it with its inclement wind, and the tulip trees, with their bronze-yellow fires, as if to warm a whole winter with their autumnal heat. All the "golden pomp," as splendidly said the classic bard and as repeated Robin Herrick in his chansons of lyric laughter, "the golden pomp" of spring and summer and fall, all planned for by the blue sky, and not all

their quite unimaginable glory runs against the color scheme of the earth and sky.

I wonder did Jesus love the rain. I need not. He thought it up. Our fields might have been irrigated without the rain. They might have been watered by mists, but there is no patter in the coming of a mist. It lacks music.

I wonder if Jesus went under cover in the rain. I will guess of him he did not. He loved the rain and stayed out in it. He smiled to hear the rain coming on the wind and loved to hear the patter of rain on the leaves and roof and road. He put the music in the rain's voice. Who but God could have thought up such quiet and heavenly minstrelsy?

How I have waited for the rain! Through months of drought listening with dry skin and throat and eyeballs burning, listening and heard the cottonwoods and the patter of their rain and thought the rain was falling—and still no rain. The rain-cloud formed with rainy visages that passed, leaving a few pattering drops falling tantalizingly and then drifted past, and a thunder peal laughed uproarious laughter at our disappointment. And the drought stayed on. And then, one night, the wind blew a rainy breath, and the clouds gloomed up over all the sky, and a distant patter of rain welcome as long-delayed voices of the spring. I ran out into the wet drench and took the rain to my heart, was drenched by it—half drowned in it—but was

glad as laughter. I can but think that the Maker of the rain would revel in its mystery and music. He stood out in the rain when the winds blew wicked gusts and the torrents resounded about him as we may hear in the closing of the Sermon on the Mount. That rainstorm is unforgettable and will be while the race of men stands in hazard for bread at the mercy of the rain. "The rains descended and the floods came."

The sky-God be thanked for it with a chorus of gratitude which should outsing wild waters and wild winds. Nobody can ever weary of the sky. Of many familiar things we tire but never of the sky. It is like the mercies of the Lord—"new every morning." It is like the kisses of love—sweet in each recurring kiss. It is like Jesus himself in its meager way (seeing sky as it is, is a naked triviality when set alongside the immensity of the Son of man).

Jesus is the amplest sky. He is room for all things. And, letting the eyes trace the life of Jesus, we perceive how the sky ministered to its spirit. Three distinct times the voice of God spoke to his Well Beloved Son from the heavens. Thrice—at his birth, at his desert temptation, and at his Gethsemane struggle—the angels broke through the heavenly doors to give him adoration and strengthening.

Out of this sky came He; into the sky went He, "up above all principalities and powers," and took up his residence in "the heavenlies," and we

are told by one who knew that such as loved Jesus were "seated in heavenly places." Tracking Jesus seems to be a heavenly thing whereby we get caught in the blue meshes of the sky and the holy rapture of the heavens; and we are told that there is to be a new heaven. The sky will last.

And when from the crest of Olivet the lovers of Jesus stood looking, looking, while they steadfastly gazed into the heavens as he went up, and they beheld him, two angels saluted them and said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

And still into the heavens we look! He will come for us who love him. Not at the last day, but at our last day. We shall not go alone along the unattempted roadways of the skies. Jesus will come and go with us.

The sky, the sky!

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